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# A study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and his influence on Johann Gottfried Herder,: as evidenced in a selection of Herder's written works.

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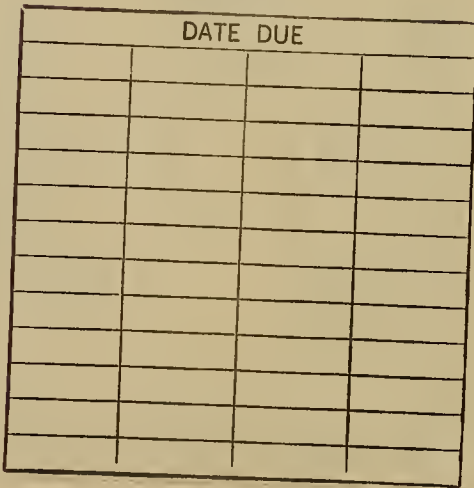
A STUDY OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, AND  
HIS INFLUENCE ON JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER,  
AS EVIDENCED IN A SELECTION OF  
HERDER'S WRITTEN WORKS

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A Study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and His Influence on  
Johann Gottfried Herder, as Evidenced in a Selection of  
Herder's Written Works

by  
Samuel Neuman

Thesis Submitted for Degree of Master of Science

Massachusetts State College

Amherst, Mass.

1937

L'homme est un être immense, en quelque sorte, qui peut exister partiellement, mais dont l'existence est d'autant plus délicieuse qu'elle est plus entière et plus pleine.

-Joubert

Hommes sensibles qui pleurez sur les maux de la Révolution, versez donc aussi quelques larmes sur les maux qui l'ont amenée.

-Michelet

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## INTRODUCTION

The multifarious aspects of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his writings have been the object of such an enormous volume of analyses, panegyrics, censorious attacks, and critical surveys of so many different sorts that there would seem to be no occasion for further attempts to explain and account for the Genevese Jean-Jacques. But he who seeks to understand Rousseau is faced with an onerous task. It would be futile for him to make a complete and thorough study of the available Rousseauana, and in the end he would have amassed a great volume of notes epitomizing every conceivable opinion of the man, from genius to idiot, with a seeming infinity of degrees and shades of opinion intervening. Unless he happened to be particularly interested in Rousseau, this painstaking research would be utterly out of the question.

I purpose, therefore, to organize the data to be found in these works and evaluate it; to bring order upon the critical treatments on the subject of Rousseau and his work, and indicate the bias which colors so many of the works dealing with him; to deduce the character of Rousseau by a study of his writings and of a representative selection of critical works on Rousseau; to fit him into the complexus of eighteenth century French society; and to account for his reaction, as manifested in his writings, to the social situation in which he found himself. To round out this study, consideration will be given to the influence he exerted. Since it would be impractical, and of little moment, to make a superficial sketch of his effect on the world in general, I have chosen to estimate his influence upon Germany, and, in particular, on Johann Gottfried Herder.

The question that arises now is: Why has Rousseau been the object of so much attention, and why, in particular, do the world's educators attribute so much significance to him who was, in the final analysis, a vagrant, a victim of mental aberrations, and a social outcast?

Whatever evils he brought about, and the condemnation of Rousseau-haters notwithstanding, Jean-Jacques Rousseau has been one of the prime influences that have caused modern history to move in its present direction. Irving Babbitt says in this regard: (1.) "The direct and demonstrable influence of Rousseau is enormous; his influence so far transcends that of the mere man of letters as to put him almost on a level with the founders of religions. In his recent lectures on Rousseau, M. Jules Lemaitre declared that he was filled with a 'sacred horror' at the magnitude of this influence." Alfred Bougeault (2.) introduces his treatise with the statement that Rousseau was incontestably one of the most influential writers of the eighteenth century; that Voltaire alone can be opposed to him. L.C.Syms (3.) says of Rousseau that "he was, after Voltaire, the writer whose political, social, and religious theories exercised the greatest influence over the eighteenth century and the French revolution." More specifically, Professor Albert Schinz (4.) cites Masson, who "frankly recognized Rousseau as the lion of the Catholic renaissance in France. He reached the conviction that

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1. Literature and the American College, p. 36.
  2. Étude sur l'état mental de J.-J. Rousseau, p. 2.
  3. Selected Letters of Voltaire, p. 122.
  4. Modern Philology, Vol. 20, p. 167.



the 'esprit austère et religieux' of Rousseau had saved France from the greatest of perils."

As for the field of education, Professor E.H.Wright (1.) declares that the educational doctrine sponsored by Rousseau has had a far greater influence than any other educational theory, and with all its ideality is at least practical enough to have become the main foundation for the schools and colleges in nearly all the world today. D.C.Champlin (2.) quotes from R. Quick: "There is no denying Rousseau's genius.....everyone who studies education must study Rousseau."

Babbitt (3.) very generously admits that "both friends and enemies are agreed as to the commanding position of Rousseau." I here use the term "generously" advisedly, inasmuch as Babbitt, Humanist, is diametrically opposite in temperament and philosophy to Rousseau, Romanticist.

It is clear that Rousseau, as a Father of the current era, must be understood if we are to appreciate this era fully, and if we would direct its progress to the greatest advantage of civilization.

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1. The Meaning of Rousseau, p. 68.
  2. Education, Vol. XLIV, p. 134.
  3. Op. cit. p. 36.

## ROUSSEAU THE MAN

Much literary heat has been occasioned by the personal failings and moral obliquities of Rousseau, and this has produced enough smoke to obscure our view of him across the one and one-half centuries that separate his life from the present. In general terms, there are two schools of thought on Rousseau: the one denounces him for his sins and concludes that any doctrine espoused by such a man must be avoided as one avoids contamination; the other maintains that his foibles must be condoned or overlooked and his doctrines adopted, since they are inherently good.

Albert Schinz (1.) scores Babbitt's Rousseau and Romanticism severely, for, he asserts, it is illegitimate to draw on Rousseau's character to abuse his doctrine. Professor Schinz' enthusiasm incites him to wield the lash of ridicule in his attack on the humanist Babbitt, who, in turn, countered in a somewhat more dignified article in the same periodical, (2.) and justified his stand as expounded in his cited work. It is significant that otherwise staid and dignified individuals allow their emotions to carry them to excesses in the field of literary criticism. But such is the effect of Rousseau.

Jean-Jacques is commonly censured for his moral turpitude, his ethical weakness and vacillation, his constant inconsistency. He admits his weaknesses and atones for his crimes in a flood of tears. This atonement is ridiculed by some and held in sin-

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1. Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method, Vol. 17, #1.
  2. Ibid.--#7.



cere reverence by others. It is timely here to consider specifically the character of his weaknesses as they are portrayed in his Confessions and elsewhere.

In his Confessions, Rousseau offers what he declares to be the true, complete, and unvarnished story of his life. He admits that he may possibly not be greater than other men, but one feature is undeniable - his uniqueness, his difference from the common run of humanity. This is his boast, the pride of his heart, the one sweet essence in his bitter cup.

This work is written in a remarkably clear, flowing style; intimate, as though he is speaking confidentially to his bosom companion - or perhaps a psychiatrist. He makes what appears to be a sincere disclosure of his innermost being, revealing the very roots of his feelings, passions, attitudes. He declares time and again his aversion to subtlety and deceit. The effect of this style upon the reader is that of a draught of lukewarm milk: fairly sweet to the taste, and pleasureable, yet leaving in the mouth and throat a faint bitterness which becomes more piquant as more is consumed. His sincerity is subjective. On reading the Confessions I am vividly aware of the reaction that though he may, and probably does, really believe he is truthful and objective to a fault, his truth is not fact.

Rousseau's childhood, he explains, was an idyll of honeyed charm and virtue, love and kindness. This early bliss was not normal. He was not a normal child; nor indeed, if his references to his father, aunt, and other childhood associates may be considered complete and representative enough as a basis for judgment, can these others be taken for normal people - using normal in its

present broad sense of mentally and morally wholesome. Jean-Jacques the child had masochistic inclinations. "To fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon, were for me the most exquisite enjoyments, and the more my blood was inflamed by the efforts of a lively imagination, the more I acquired the appearance of a whining lover." (1.) Furthermore, his extreme self-abuse, practised throughout his youth, has been designated as the cause of some of the physical torment he suffered during a large part of his later life, and which finally drove him to madness and suicide (if we may believe that he did commit suicide. This is still a moot question).

He reiterates a number of times that his passions were colossal, throughout his life, but his chastity remained until relatively late in his life, since he avoided physical contact, and sought relief in imaginary activity. In time, he succeeded in building an imagination so vivid that he became unable to distinguish between fact and fancy. Although he had passed the age of fifty when he wrote his Confessions, he still regarded his childhood and adolescent loves as true and sublime. The essence of Book II, captioned Youth, may be stated as follows, if I may indulge in a Romantic hyperbole: The mere sight of a beautiful woman caused his hair to stand erect; if she smiled at him, it fell out.

Any who spoke with the young Rousseau received the impression that he was silly, unintelligent, and completely untarnished by even the suggestion of a rational faculty. He accounts

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for the implicit error by explaining that his was a volatile heart, (1.) a quick-feeling heart, acting too swiftly for his sluggish mind to keep abreast; but if he has time to let his mind catch up with his heart, and if he waits until then to express himself, he admits that his genius would be equalled by very, very few in the world. In this connection a quotation extracted from Reluctantly Told, by J. Hillyer, will cast an unique light on Rousseau's mental processes. Jane Hillyer has recently (before the publication of her book) recovered from a four-year period of insanity, during which time she was, of course, safely confined in a lunatic asylum. Having been completely cured, she is under the observation of a psychologist (to whom she refers as "the Woodsman") who is helping her to orient herself to a new (normal) environment, her home, and her friends.

"I became to myself not so much an individual as a mere unit in a species - and not a very exciting one either. Emotional reactions had become very largely subjected to reason. What the Woodsman finally succeeded in doing, in a word, was to make me feel with my mind, not to think with my feelings." (2.)

Rousseau has been accused by numerous critics of being infinitely conceited. "I am certainly the first man, that, living with a people who treated him well, and whom he almost adored, put on, even in their own country (France) a borrowed air of despising them." (3.) Sometimes an exaggerated sense of importance shows itself in peculiar fashions. Babbitt and others point

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1. Ibid. - p. 72.

2. Reluctantly Told - p. 189.

3. Confessions - p. 119.

out Rousseau's affliction (one of them) as a case of megalomania. Many victims of this psychological aberration are safely incarcerated, that they may do no harm - to others, as well as to themselves. Rousseau was allowed the liberty of promulgating his ideas. It was conceit which, in him, sired many of the ideas which threw France into confusion in 1789.

The famous (or infamous) contribution of Rousseau to civilization, the contribution that contains the seeds of many of our present social ills - and, to be sure, many benefits - is his propagation of the gospel of liberty, of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

Rousseau directed his fiery passion at the contemporaneous social abuses, notably abuses of human rights, at the curtailment of human freedom, and condemned all society as immoral, evil, inherently wicked. 'Man,' he cried, 'is good; men are evil! Man alone is a creature of God; man in company with his fellows becomes inevitably a caricature of Satan.' "If I have a dislike for society, it is more their fault than mine." (1) Jean-Jacques himself, when alone, was divine. He was aware of it. Of a young Spanish friend, he says, "This wise-hearted as well as wise-headed man knew mankind and was my friend; this was my only answer to such as are not so." (2)

Jean-Jacques was a life-long adolescent. Ordinary mortals soon come to accept the usefulness of habit, and relegate the petty, routine activity of daily affairs to the control of habit. Society "mechanizes" its routine in habit, and assures its smooth function by forcing appropriate habits on recalcitrant individ-

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1. Confessions - p. 124
  2. Ibid. - p. 223.



uals. Rousseau, however, was different. "Constraint and subjection in every shape are to me insupportable, and alone sufficient to make me hate even pleasure itself." (1.) In one place (2.) he indicates one habit that he did form. He could never learn to dance, since corns caused him to walk on his heels, and he was unable to modify this habit.

A predominant feature in Jean-Jacques is "my rambling disposition." He was never able to remain long in any occupational position he or his friends procured for him. During his early twenties, he lived with Mme. de Warens, whom he loved as an amalgamation of mother-sister-mistress. His sentiment for her, he explains, (3.) was not love but something more intimate. He was in poor health, during his period of life with Mme. de Warens, and accounts for it (4.) by the "fact" that "I was dying for love without an object". He had a "tender, sympathetic friend" in this mistress, but she was not his loved one.

Fears devoured him constantly regarding Mme. de Warens and her inefficient use of her financial resources, and the probability that he would eventually have to leave her. His imagination carried him to all kinds of horrible conclusions. He soon wasted away to a living skeleton, seized with profound melancholy; he wept and sighed because he felt his life ebbing away before his having had time to enjoy it. For the next thirty years he was troubled with a loud beating in his arteries, hardness of hearing, and insomnia. (5.)

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1. Ibid. - p. 125.
  2. Ibid. - p. 132.
  3. Ibid. - p. 148.
  4. Ibid. - p. 145.
  5. Ibid. - p. 152.

At this point in life, at the age of twenty-five, he finds he has learned little. He makes the resolution to know everything, through a process of self-education, reading and meditation. "I will begin by laying up a stock of ideas, true or false, but carefully conceived, till my understanding shall be sufficiently furnished to enable me to compare and make choice of those that are most estimable." (1.) His eagerness to learn became a consuming passion. To make sure he would understand and retain the material he read, he adopted the procedure of perpetually muttering passages and excerpts from the books he read. However, the heat of this new passion was soon a thing of the past. He soon lost his intense enthusiasm for mental exertion.

It seems not unlikely that his weaknesses and illnesses up to this point were due to his lack of real occupation and goal in life. Such existence from day to day, more or less in seclusion, with all concern turned in upon himself would very likely cause any man to show peculiar developments - if a normal man could bring himself to live in this manner.

On his way to medical treatment he fell in with a Mme. de Larnage. She overcame his shy, retiring disposition, and their mutual bliss was consummated. "It is owing to Mme. de Larnage that I did not go out of the world without having tasted real pleasure." (2.) But later he confesses that he had had no true love for this woman.

Returning to Mme. de Warens, he found his place usurped by a young man, and rather than share her favors, he preferred the

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1. Ibid. p. 158.
  2. Ibid. p. 170.



alternative of seeking his fortunes elsewhere. He became tutor to two young children. But in this position he was a marked failure. He saw his mistakes, but was incapable of correcting them. "Everything I undertook failed, because all I did to effect my designs was precisely what I ought not to have done." (1.) He was "awkward, bashful, and stupid." After a year with these children he left for Paris.

Advice was given him to the effect that, since he has found no success in the man's world in thirty years of life, he ought to concentrate upon woman. He started with Therese, a moronic young needle-woman. She could not read, count, tell time, write figures, reckon in terms of money, or name the twelve months of the year. And Rousseau was not able to teach her any of this. "I began by declaring to her that I would never either abandon or marry her. Love, esteem, artless sincerity were the ministers of my triumph, and it was because her heart was tender and virtuous (she had confessed to him that she had 'fallen', but Rousseau thought nothing of that), that I was happy without being presuming." (2.)

Rousseau dates the origin of his misfortunes in life from the moment of error when he decided to compete for the premium offered by the Mercure de France on the subject: Has the progress of science and the arts contributed to corrupt or purify morals? He won the premium. (3.) This success aroused in him ideas concerning heroic freedom, superiority to fortune and opinion,

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1. Ibid. - p. 180
  2. Ibid. - p. 224
  3. 1750

independence of all exterior circumstances. At first, a "false shame" and the fear of disapprobation prevented him from conducting himself according to his "free" principles. However, he soon overcame his scruples and resolved to live freely - that is, more freely than he had been living.

Apparently a manifestation of his superiority to circumstances is his treatment of his five children, whom he sent to a foundling hospital immediately upon their birth. At various moments thereafter he entertained various reactions to this procedure. He felt he had acted like a good father, an honest citizen, and considered himself a member of the Republic of Plato. Since that time his heart reproached his misconduct in this instance, but his reason persisted in upholding his measure. Clearly, his apology in this matter is rationalization for a selfish, inhuman act. "I could have wished, and still should be glad, had I been brought up as they (his children) have been." (1.) Apparently he forgets what he has earlier described as his blissful childhood.

Celebrity came to him with the publication of the prize essay, and brought new troubles. "I became sour and cynic from shame, and affected to despise the politeness which I knew not how to practise." (2.) As a new social lion he received invitations to attend elegant functions for which his forty years of aimless rambling and concentrated self-indulgence and self-pity had certainly not prepared him. He continues, and convicts himself and his principles: "This austerity, conformable to my new

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1. Ibid. - p. 243

2. Ibid. - p. 251



principles, I must confess, seemed to ennoble itself in my mind; it assumed in my eyes the form of the intrepidity of virtue, and I dare assert it to be upon this noble basis (that of virtue!) that it supported itself longer and better than could have been expected from anything so contrary to my nature." It is indeed remarkable that Rousseau should maintain an attitude of austerity. But he could remain inflexible in his loyalty to virtue. If he did have native talent, it was concentrated not in his rational faculty, but in his rationalistic facility. He later discusses a pension he might have received from the king, but did not, simply for the reason that he did not put himself to the trouble to win it tactfully and with the requisite firmness of purpose. He admits that he did not attempt to get the pension because he was afraid to: he feared the presence of the king and his retainers. Then Jean-Jacques rationalizes himself into the belief that he really did not want the pension.

Under the influence of "my foolish pride, I thought myself capable of destroying all imposture; and thinking that, to make myself listened to, it was necessary my conduct should agree with my principles, I adopted the singular manner of life which I have not been permitted to continue, the example of which my pretended friends have never forgiven me, which at first made me ridiculous, and would have at length rendered me respectable, had it been possible for me to persevere." (1.) It does not seem likely that a ridiculous mode of life can make a man respectable simply because he adheres to it. True, his neighbors might become

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1. Ibid. - p. 286

accustomed to his absurdity and reconciled to his presence, but respectability implies decorum - and decorum is not attained by the individualist whose dress and demeanor are "regulated" by caprice and the urge to be different, independent of tradition.

During a period of at least four years, he points out, (1.) "whilst this effervescence continued at its greatest height, there is nothing great and good that can enter the heart of man, of which I was not capable between heaven and myself. Hence flowed my sudden eloquence; hence, in my first writings, that fire really celestial, which consumed me, and whence during forty years not a single spark had escaped, because it was not yet lighted up."

Again this old wail appears. (2.) Though he should now be very happy, he is not. "How was it possible that, with a mind naturally expansive, I, with whom to live was to love, should not hitherto have found a friend entirely devoted to me; a real friend: I who felt myself so capable of being such a friend to another? .....Tormented by the want of loving, without ever having been able to satisfy it, I perceived myself approaching the eve of old age, and hastening on to death without having lived." This reiterated complaint is obviously a sign of mental defection. It is known that Diderot was truly his friend, as intimate as ever could be desired by a normal person; that Therese was likewise such a friend. But nobody could satisfy Rousseau's craving. He has said that even in the closest

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1. Ibidem

2. Ibid. - p. 293



embrace he still did not feel close enough to the object of his love. He evidently yearned, as did the Romanticists who followed, to have his very soul melt and intermingle with the similarly dissolved soul of some divinely inspired individual temperamentally attuned to Rousseau's psychic wave-length.

"To what end was I born," he moans, (1) "with exquisite faculties? To suffer them to remain unemployed? The sentiment of conscious merit, which made me consider myself as suffering injustice, was some kind of reparation, and caused me to shed tears which with pleasure I suffered to flow." He was then forty-five years old. At this point he again became the "fond shepherd". Realizing the futility of seeking happiness in the drab three-dimensional world, and being aware that he was different from all mankind, he turned to his imagination and created a world all his own. "In my continual ecstasy, I intoxicated my mind with the most delicious sentiments that ever entered the heart of man. Entirely forgetting the human species, I formed to myself societies of perfect beings, whose virtues were as celestial as their beauty, tender and faithful friends, such as I never found here below." (2) So completely did he surrender himself to the world of his imagination that he vigorously repulsed any disturbance which might detain him on earth, or recall him to the earth, the home of the mere mortal. His summary treatment of those who ventured to address him was so tactless and inconsiderate that he acquired a reputation for

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1. Ibidem

2. Ibid. - p. 294

misanthropy.

ADOLESCENT seems to be the most fitting general term to describe the personality of Rousseau. Abnormal adolescent is even closer to the precise description he requires. His self-pre-occupation and conceit prevented him from benefiting from his experiences, and the result was that he did not finally succeed in orienting himself to the social level on which he might have remained indefinitely. French society in the eighteenth century, particularly its upper strata, was marked by its polish, its éclat, its sparkling wit, and the like. Courtesy and gallantry were cultivated to the highest possible degree. As a guest at the Luxembourg palace, high in the favor of the Duke and the Duchess, mixing intimately with the "cream" of the French nobility, Jean-Jacques was eminently in a position to acquire considerable polish. But instead, what advantage did he derive? He often committed idiotic blunders in tact, and then blamed and censured his friends for trying to regulate his conduct. It is significant that he liked to move in these brilliant circles. But he refused, probably because he felt unequal to the effort, to raise himself so that he might actually belong there.

"My talent was that of telling men useful but severe truths with energy and courage; to this it was necessary to confine myself. Not only was I not born to flatter, but I knew not how to commend. The awkwardness of the manner in which I have sometimes bestowed eulogium has done me more harm than the severity of my censure." (1.)

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1. Ibid. - p. 382



The publication of Emile was the occasion for Rousseau's exile from France. His native Switzerland ordered his arrest. He was called impious, atheist, madman, beast. He now finds ample reason to weep. And what bliss it is: "O how delightful are the tears of tenderness and joy! How does my heart drink them up! Why have I not had reason to shed them more frequently?" (1.)

Frederick II of Germany admitted him to Germany, where he took to wearing Armenian clothes and making laces to pass the time of day with his feminine neighbors. These laces he gave to his young women friends as wedding gifts, on condition that they suckle their children themselves.

It was not long before no continental nation would have him, and he was obliged to leave for England.

As evidence of Rousseau's virtue, Frederika MacDonald (2.) quotes from the letter written to one Sophie by Mirabeau, from his Vincennes prison: "He was virtuous in despite of nature, of man, and of fortune; .....he was virtuous, notwithstanding the weaknesses which he has revealed in the Memoirs of his life, - for, endowed by nature with the incorruptible and virtuous soul of an epicurean, he yet observed in his habits the austere morals of a stoic. Whatever bad use may be made of his Confessions, they will always prove the good faith of a man who spoke as he thought, wrote as he spoke, lived as he wrote, and died as he had lived." This virtue is refuted above, in

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1. Ibid. - p. 413

2. Jean Jacques Rousseau, A New Criticism - Vol. 1 - p. 1

excerpts culled from Rousseau's own pen. An interesting note is added by the Duchesse de Choiseul in a letter (1.) to Mme. du Deffand on July 17, 1766: Rousseau is always dominated by his vanity, affects singularity to attract celebrity, refuses to show gratitude lest he incur the slightest obligation. He has preached to all the nations, crying out: "Hear ye! I am the oracle of truth; my bizarre manners are but the mark of my simplicity, of which my face is a very symbol. I am the fabricator of virtue, the essence of all justice....." - and thereby he brings trouble into society. He finally ended by raising the standard of revolt in his own country, he whipped up the fires of discord among his co-citizens, armed them one against the other by distributing seditious papers among the people! HE IS A CHARLATAN OF VIRTUE!

Mme. de Staël is notoriously a disciple of Rousseau. Yet the best that Mrs. McDonald can find about him in her writings is that the source of his eloquence is a "passionate sincerity." Sincerity is, to be sure, a characteristic of Rousseau. But it is a subjective sincerity. He starts, as I have intimated above, in his own words, by making a statement or striking an attitude. It will usually be something out of the ordinary, and the public reaction will be wonderment, surprise, pity, horror, or the like. Rousseau will delight in finding himself in the public eye, and hasten to adopt the new pose into his daily exercises in posture. He always thought he was perfectly sincere. And he found nothing easier than to cast off one conviction or unit of sincerity in



in favor of another that might be more effective, or easier to maintain. Mrs. MacDonald declares that Rousseau is the object of scorn and hatred merely because his unscrupulous enemies, Grimm, Diderot, and Mme. d'Épinay (it was she who, incidentally, furnished Rousseau with a cottage on her estate, free of rental charge, for a number of years), conspired to make his name hateful to posterity. Mrs. MacDonald's research has established the fact that Grimm instigated somebody of unknown identity to help him tamper with the Memoirs (manuscript) of Mme. d'Épinay to blacken Rousseau's name even further.

Most interesting of all, however, is the thesis of Frederika MacDonald that Rousseau is not to be condemned for disposing of his five children in a foundling-home. She builds a structure of facts as a seamstress might build a patchwork frock, pinning one piece to the next, and where fact (the original material) is wanting, intuition will suffice. After telling that Rousseau had no children, she proceeds to show that he could not have taken them to the asylum; and she introduces the idea that Jean-Jacques' physical condition obviated even the possibility of fatherhood. Then comes the statement that his "mother-in-law" tricked him in to believing that Therese was about to conceive. The "expectant mother" was sent to the house of a midwife, and somehow Rousseau was influenced to induce Therese to give up her child (each time, for five times). Rousseau, according to this research, believed that he actually did commit this atrocity (in which case he is morally accountable). And to cap her story, Mrs. MacDonald glibly cites the

heartfelt regret that Rousseau shows in Émile.

The proof that Jean-Jacques had no children is negative. Evidently, this Rousseau-scholar started on the research after reading Rousseau's statement that he had never seen his children. Add to that the fact that no trace of these children has to date been found, and all the evidence in support of this thesis is at hand. But whether or not these children were actually born and disposed of, Rousseau thought they were. And numerous are the references he makes to them, to their disposal, to his broken heart, to his castigation on remembering his vicious negligence. Perhaps he told the story of bestial fatherhood simply to win public attention. Although it is commonly believed that these children did exist, and were disposed of, this alternative hypothesis is conceivable. Another biographer, de Barnell, referred to by Alfred Bougeault, (1.) supports the thesis that Rousseau was not the father of Therese's children, and knew it. Hence the abandonment.

It is again peculiar that Jean-Jacques should desire to eliminate those children and continue to live with their mother. If he loved her, his desire to keep her is comprehensible - but why punish her by removing her children? He was aware of her low mentality and lack of morality. How, again, does it happen that he was still willing to allow their relationships to remain unaffected by four more such incidents? Perhaps he realized the significance of his own unique moral code and granted her equality in the right to draw up her own code

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1. Étude sur l'état mental de J.-J. Rousseau -131



and abide by it. Are present day educators willing to accept this explanation, and continue to point to Rousseau as the Father of Democracy? Does there not seem to be something as yet unexplained in this issue?

On the other hand, Hume, whom Rousseau came to know intimately in England, said of Jean-Jacques: "He has an excellent warm heart.....I love him much, and hope that I may have some share in his affections.....He is <sup>a</sup>very modest, mild, well-bred, gentle-spirited and warm-hearted man, as ever I knew in my life." (1.)

By far the outstanding Rousseauophile is Hippolyte Buffenoir, who is so completely a lover of Rousseau that he has adopted the latter's way of thinking and feeling. Why do we love Rousseau before all men, he asks in his foreword? (2.) Because none has suffered as has Jean-Jacques! Recall the spontaneous transport of Mme. d'Houdetot one evening, when she was alone with J.-J. under the light of the moon: "Non, jamais homme ne fut si aimable, et jamais aiant n'aima comme vous!" Buffenoir found this eulogium among Rousseau's writings. Is it not unusual for a man of ethical principles, for a gentleman, to publish such a bouquet?

Jean-Jacques was dear to all women during his lifetime. (3.) As to the judgement of the women of today, Buffenoir assures us that any who profess antipathy toward him base their sentiments on what they have heard regarding the unlovely passages in the Confessions, and the fact that he placed his five children in an

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1. Rousseau- by John Morley- Vol. 2- p. 284
  2. Le Prestige de J.-J. Rousseau p. 1X
  3. Ibid. -p. 67



asylum, and that he did not hesitate to make open confession of his amours, naming his mistresses.

With his tongue in his cheek, and hiding behind a screen of satire, Buffenoir delivers the caution: Do not attempt to explain his faults and misfortunes, the originality of his character and his genius; do not allege that if we knew his weaknesses, it is because he himself confessed them, and that, furthermore, he expiated them dreadfully; do not go so far as to insinuate that, united to an inferior woman, he renounced his children only because they were actually not his, as George Sand believed; in brief, do not take up his defense too warmly, lest you appear capable of every ignominy. Do not speak of Rousseau to these people (women especially). At the very utterance of the name "ROUSSEAU", an epileptic furor possesses these large-hearted ladies; their eyes flash with rage, their faces pale, their mouths jerk spasmodically; foam rises to their lips, and imprecations gush out in precipitous flood. They excuse the crimes of the greatest criminals, but they do not condone the minutest iota, will not forgive the pettiest peccadillo of him who wrote the Confessions. "Your Rousseau was nothing but a flunkey!" the woman will screech in a voice rendered husky by alcohol and lunacy! (1.)

Buffenoir's irony is rather not subtle, nor is it strictly classical and literary or even decent! It might well be described as Rousseauistic. Ethically, his attitude condemns

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1. Ibid. - pp. 69-71

itself. And as for contempt for the woman who accuses Rousseau of being a flunkey, he is not entirely without reason. Rousseau could never be a valet. Never! A valet must be willing to work, must be willing, and able, to carry out the will of a superior, must be capable of suppressing his own ego during the time of service. Rousseau could not conceive of himself, perhaps, in a position of servility, because 'all men are equal' and Rousseau never had a superior.

A true Rousseauist, to the very core of his heart, Buffenoir's style is subjective, and his rational process a phenomenon of paradox, inconsistency, and self-refutation. He selects his facts with an eye to the proof he desires, and voilà! he builds it. He quotes passages from a number of Rousseau's feminine admirers, and, wiping a tear from his cheek, delivers a threnody: One's soul is seized with regret; one would wish to have known these women, admired them, and loved them. One is saddened at the thought that their seductions, their freedom from prejudice, their intellectual curiosity will never be revived - and one envelops their memory with the most affectionate caresses. (1.) Buffenoir confesses himself to be a kindred soul to Rousseau, and admits he was inflamed even as a child, reading school-book excerpts from Rousseau's writings. (2.)

Ordinarily, men do not fall in love with women because of the charm of their "freedom from prejudice" and "intellectual curiosity". And ordinarily, men confine themselves to a single

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1. Prestige - p. 93

2. J.-J. Rousseau et les femmes - p. 45



woman to love. There is a latent sensualism (sometimes it comes to the surface in no uncertain terms) in the words of Buffenoir that I find definitely related to Rousseau, who "falls in love with all women; always ardently." (1.) Rousseau said of Mme. de Larnage, one of his prominent mistresses: "Her daughter, on whom I thought in spite of myself, more than I ought, continues to disturb my mind. I trembled at the idea of falling in love with her, and this fear accomplished half the process."

Elsewhere he confesses: "For a whole summer I spent two hours per day teaching arithmetic to a pretty girl, and did not say a single gallant word, or cast a single meaning glance. If that came five or six years later, I should not have been so well-behaved, so foolish." He was susceptible to convulsive erotic fits; but despite the most combustible temperament nature had ever formed, his faculty of deriving delicious satisfaction through the activity of his imagination prevented him from brutal acts of voluptuousness. Almost from the moment of his birth, to use his own expression, his blood was a-boil with sensual fire. (2.)

Irving Babbitt quotes from Joubert in this vein: "Rousseau had a voluptuous mind. In his writings the soul is always mingled with the body and never distinct from it. No one has ever rendered more vividly the impression of the flesh touching the spirit and the delights of their marriage."

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1. Brédif - Du caractère Intellectuel et Moral de J.-J. Rousseau- p.22
  2. Brédif - op. cit. - p. 228



Buffenoir concludes (1.) on what may be considered a note of Romantic humility: ' I recognize his weaknesses. He was a man. But what do they amount to, in comparison with his genius? Besides, what should we have known of them had he not made voluntary confession? Must we reproach a penitent for the confession of his faults?' Rousseau himself said these very things in the same general way.

James Russell Lowell, in a sympathetic approach to the personality of Rousseau, accounts for the dislike of certain prominent Englishmen for Jean-Jacques on the occasion of his exile in England: (2.)

"Burke's hatred of Rousseau was genuine and instinctive. It was so genuine and so instinctive as no hatred can be but that of self, of our own weaknesses as we see them in another man."

Jean-Jacques was sensitive as few men are sensitive. His extreme acuteness of feeling is attributed, in an article in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (3.), "not to a spirit of refined or superior organization, but to mere physical weaknesses; nay more, to a distempered state of nerves brought on by debauchery." Such sensitivity, as is to be expected, gave rise to an extreme sentimentalism, as is pointed out in Lowell's article on Rousseau and the Sentimentalists. He remarks the singularity (4.) that a man "whose character is so variously contemptible, even

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1. Prestige - p. 560
  2. North American Review - Vol. 105 - p. 243
  3. No. XL1 - Vol. XI - Feb. 1822 - On the Genius and Character of Rousseau.
  4. op. cit. - p. 245

revolting, should have exercised, and continue to exercise, so deep and lasting an influence on minds so different" - that he should have been the intellectual father of Byron, Jefferson, Thomas Paine; that he should attract men like Gibbon and Napoleon even after the lapse of a century. Rousseau "could not have been the mere sentimentalist and rhetorician for which the rough-and-ready understanding would at first glance be inclined to condemn him. In a certain sense he was both of these, but he was something more." Jean-Jacques, Lowell contends, was a genius, and a genius is forgiven for everything. He "may be sordid, like the lamp of Aladdin", but "what care we, while the touch of it builds palaces for us?"

Rousseau, he continues, is the "highest and most perfect type of the sentimentalist of genius." Lowell does not overlook the distinction between sentiment and sentimentality. The former may be described as an intellectualized emotion, whereas the latter is of a weak, lachrymose composition, ever ready to release a flood of tears at the merest provocation or none at all. Sentimentality, he points out, is habit-forming, demanding increasingly intense gratification.

"It is one of the most curious features of the sentimental ailment," Lowell adds, "that, while it shuns the contact of men, it courts publicity." (1.)

Rousseau (2.) shows Rousseau's preference for a solitude, which was very lively augmented by his monomania, his obsession that he was being persecuted and the victim of secret

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1. Ibid. - p. 265  
2. op. cit. - p. 6



plots.

A vivid impression of Rousseau's sensitivity and urge for being a public spectacle is presented in The Catholic World (1.) by Dr. J. J. Reilly. Consider Rousseau, "the sentimentalist, the self-deceiving poseur, the neurasthenic, whose senses were so delicately alive to every reaction that he became a creature of poignant delight, and of no less poignant pain. The keenness of his senses he deliberately incited, not by indulgence that was gross, but by indulgence that was delicately discriminating, until he became an epicure of sensations, an exquisite in what may be called the sensuality of the mind. (2.) And he paid the price. He cut the middle ground from under his feet and, like DeQuincey with his opium, he dwelt either among the fragrance and splendor of a dream-paradise or in the pangs of the inferno".

With all his professed candor with the world, he was not candid with himself. " 'Listen,' cries Rousseau, (3.) and I will tell you all!" "He proclaims it while he sheds tears of

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1. Vol. CXVI - No. 696 - p. 26

2. "William James took a rather mischievous pleasure in reminding his readers that they like the smell of skunk - until it gets too strong. 'Every one', he said, 'who has a wound or hurt anywhere, a sore tooth, for example, will ever and anon press it just to bring out the pain.'"

If this is human, how eminently super-human was Rousseau! Not only did he 'press on his wound' till it caused torturous suffering, but he appealed to the world for sympathy.

3. Reilly - op. cit. - p. 27



shame and wrings his hands and beats his breast, but he does not forget to keep his eyes on his listeners, and when he surprises them in a fit of astonishment or disgust, his powers of self-hypnosis quite transform him. He steps out of himself and, leaping over the footlights, becomes a part of his own audience." Jean-Jacques the spectator looks on Jean-Jacques the performer and bursts into applause. "Says Lowell: 'Rousseau cries, "I will bare my heart to you!" and, throwing open his waist-coat, makes us the confidants of his dirty linen.'"

In summary: Rousseau had a good heart. He was feeble, lacking any moral energy soever. But his heart, the seat of his personality, is sincerely gentle and tender. He is good - until he is called upon to apply his goodness. Confession of a fault or misdeed cost him less than the moral energy required to avoid it in the first place. To act against his penchant was always impossible to him. He rationalized, here: (1.) "There is no virtue in following one's penchants, and taking the pleasure of right conduct; virtue, on the contrary, consists in conquering those penchants when duty commands it; and that is something I have been less able than anyone in the world to do." He knew his duties, respected them, but avoided further contact with them.

Considering his great heart, he was obviously made for society and social intercourse - but his forty years of vagabondage certainly did not prepare him for a social life. He

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1. Brédif - op. cit. - p. 149

loved society, yearned to become accepted in aristocratic circles, found himself unable to reach his goal, and formed a hatred for society. Rousseau fundamentally unsocial? He if people but knew how extremely sociable he is, in the woods, with the creatures of his imagination!

Jean-Jacques was proud, conceited. Rarely, if ever, was he guilty of affected modesty. "When I left France," he declared, (1.) "I wished to honor with my retreat that state in Europe for which I had the greatest esteem." At a play where a couplet was sung to his skill, he took a seat visible to everyone present, and heartily applauded the laudatory lines, and was delighted at the noisy gaiety of the pit, which could not get its fill of the pleasure of laughing at him. "He must have compared himself withocrates," suggests Brédif.

Liberty was the deity to which he rendered homage. He could not bear indebtedness to anyone, since gratitude curtails one's liberty. He loved intimacy, since that state to him had no requirements. Before accepting the Hermitage (houses offered him by Mme. d'Almay) he enumerated to her the consideration to which he was entitled as a solitary, sensitive, infirm, poor man (though he was in the prime of life). In reply to the offer of friendship extended to him by the Baron d'Holbach he said: 'You are too rich. I prefer to serve my friend, provided he be as poor as I. If he be richer, let him serve me, since he has more time to devote to pleasure.'

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1. Brédif - op. cit. -p. 131

"However does not become impassioned on my account it unworthy of me.....I was made to be the best friend who ever was; but he who is to return appropriate affection has not been created." (1.)

He is king of illusion. It is not possible for him to distinguish between truth and imagined ideas. And as rationalizer he is fearless. He replied to his accusers: How could I be the vicious one you decry? Look at my writings! And he specifies the sections which attest his virtue. No man, he contended, was capable of producing such profound sentiment, such hot literary tears and convulsive passions as vicious and hard-hearted.

He is indolent and a slave to his passion. He is a natural man. The natural man is the sensual man. He would willingly do good, but neglected righteous conduct either because it were too easily accomplished or because it would lay him open to the onus of acknowledging gratitude in his beneficiaries. His gravest faults are of omission, rather than commission. He has the courage to wish, but not to execute the wish.

Throughout his life he remained a child. Showing no concern for the future, he allowed himself to be borne about at random by the winds of chance, by the stresses of life, just as children let themselves slide down a snow-covered hill - if nothing obstructs their passage.

He longed for recognition as a different being. "J'aimé-



rais mieux être ignoré de tout le genre humain que d'être regardé comme un homme ordinaire." (1.)

Field to the point of confusion, he spreads before the public eye the most unblushing confessions. He is the personification of singularity and paradox. His aspirations contradict his impulses. Moral instinct and pathological instinct draw him in contrary directions. He is antithesis incarnate.

He felt himself beset with worries, dangers, plots - as Don Quixote saw enchanters everywhere. He felt himself the object of incessant persecution. He was devoured by yearnings for something he knew not.

But he had a good heart.

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1. I should prefer to be completely unknown to man, rather than to be recognized as an ordinary man. - Ibid. - p. 393

# EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SOCIETY

In 1789 (opening date of the French revolution) three classes - clergy, nobility, royalty - occupied the most prominent position in the state. Hippolyte Taine, in The Ancient Regime, draws a vivid picture of the political situation in Europe, particularly in France, and accounts for it by an analysis of the course of history from the early middle ages, and a study of the evolution of the feudal system. A brief review of this study will be efficacious in promoting a clear understanding of Rousseau's social environment and his reaction to it.

In a state gradually crumbling away, (1.) the clergy had formed a 'living society governed by law and discipline, with a common object and doctrine, sustained by the devotion of chiefs and by the obedience of the believers.' Such a society alone was capable of subsisting under the flood of barbarians which the empire in ruin suffered to pour in through its breaches. Under the superstitious fear of clerical anathema, the invading Huns refrained from destroying towns administered by the church.

Moreover, the priesthood alone knew the use of pen and paper, and the value of debate. They strove to render the law national and to preserve piety, instruction, justice, and the institution of marriage. They preached loving resignation in the hands of the Heavenly Father; inspired patience, gentleness, humility, charity, and self-abnegation. Thus did they open to man a spiritual daylight and freshness.

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1. Reference to fall of Roman Empire - Taine - op. cit. - p. 2

During the middle ages the clergy repressed the nobility, their brutal appetites and ferocious outbursts that tended to lacerate the social fabric.

They preserved the essential industries and fostered the preservation of a portion of pagan literature, art, and science. They fostered the human taste for labor. To food for the body they added food for the soul, and gave man inducements to live; at least with resignation that made life endurable.

To the thirteenth century, the clergy stood virtually alone in this function. How divine their legend; how inestimable its value under the universal reign of brute force, when to endure this life it was necessary to imagine another, and to render the second as visible to the spiritual eye as the first to the physical.

Popes, for two centuries, were the dictators of Europe. The church held one-third of the territory, one-half the revenue, and two-thirds the capital.

In the tenth century, the military noble has become firmly established, and has become capable of defending others, of benefaction. He is perhaps a martial bishop, a valiant abbot, or a retired bandit. The story runs that the Capets are descended from a Parisian butcher.

This order develops a stable society by grouping together men who can coöperate to protect themselves and their possessions. Men are now born with the certainty of never being abandoned by their chieftans, and with the obligation of giving them even life itself, if need arise. In this epoch



of perpetual warfare, only the militant regimen is effective. Such is the feudal system. Necessity has established a tacit contract whereby the early settlers work for the land-lord, cultivate his soil, in return for his protection. They become his serfs, taxable and workable at his discretion. The risks to which the people were ever subjected were worse than any mistreatment from the nobles. The proof is that the people flocked to the feudal structure as soon as it was completed.

The orthogenetic peak of the evolution of this system is the king.

Primogeniture was instituted for the purpose of maintaining undivided sovereignty and patronage, but its inherent nature helped bring about the downfall of the nobility. "The elder sons of the nobility swept away two-thirds of the property, while the younger sons shared in one-third of the parental heritage." (1.) In time, it is obvious that the nobility be left with only a modicum of property plus the right of taxation. Consequently, their fortunes dying, and their living expenses great, as a result of their lavish pride and extravagant standard of living, they sold their land and enforced onerous loads of taxation on the peasants - loads eventually unbearable.

Generally, the noble has become a useless member of the state. He is unemployed, enervated, and bored with life on

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1. Taine - op. cit. - p. 39

his domain. Pleasure and success are found concentrated at the court. The noble becomes a courtier. With the rulers and administrators all living at court, away from the people and lands under their jurisdiction, the people find themselves burdened with taxation to support unknown land-lords in idleness and luxury. Reduced to a bare subsistence level, and even to beggary, the peasants, under the incessant pressure of the tax-collectors, conceive a violent odium for the absentee seignior.

"When sovereignty becomes transformed into a sinecure becomes burdensome without being useful, and on becoming burdensome without being useful it is overthrown." (1.)

The clergy became predominantly interested in secular affairs. They made conversions at the point of the bayonet. They became the instruments of the lust for wealth and power.

The courtiers are now the king's intimates; men of his own stamp; the only ones with whom he can converse, and whom it is necessary to make contented. He cannot avoid helping them. Since nobility is one of the glories of the throne, the king must re-gild it as often as necessary.

For a century a steady murmur against the aristocrats has been rising and expanding until it becomes an uproar. The lower nobility and clergy are largely discontented. In grasping all powers (especially Louis XIV: "L'état, c'est moi.") the king insensibly has assumed all functions - a superhuman centraliza-

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1. Ibid. - p. 59



tion of powers in one man. Without the requisite uniformity and control at the command of this one man, an army of petty pachas has inevitably arisen. The machine escapes from his grasp.

The center of the government is the center of the wrangs and miseries of the masses. Here it is that the public abscess comes to a head, and here will it break. France is in a state of dissolution (mid-eighteenth century) for the reason that the privileged classes had forgotten their characters as public men.

"Like the whole ancient regime the court is the empty form, the surviving adornment of a military institution, the causes of which have disappeared while the effects remain, useless surviving utility..." (1.)

Similar circumstances have led other European aristocracies to similar ways and habits. But outside of France the soil was unfavorable and the seed was not of the right sort for the plant of pomp to flourish as it did within France.

Requirements for happiness to the Frenchman are of a peculiar nature: delicate, light, rapid, incessantly renewed and varied, furnishing nutriment for his self-love, his emotional faculties, his intellect. This quality of happiness is provided for him only in society and in conversation.

"One could not imagine to what a degree social art had overcome natural instincts." Eighteenth century French society drew up a detailed code of behavior. There was a certain specified way of conducting oneself, of thinking, of feeling, to be applied at all times when the individual was not completely



alone. There was a required way of walking, of sitting down, of saluting, of picking up a glove, of living, of dying. It was impossible to address a man without 'placing oneself at his orders', or a woman without 'casting oneself at her feet'. Fashion, Le bon ton, regulated every proceeding. He who failed to conform with this code, even in the slightest degree, was contemptuously referred to as a "specimen". Under no circumstances could the eccentric, the unforeseen, the spontaneous, vivid inspiration be accepted.

The status of children is incompatible with the present-day conception of humane sympathy. The son of the Duc de Lauzun, in this issue, wrote about his own childhood: "I was, like all the children of my age and of my station, dressed in the handsomest clothes to go out, and naked and dying of hunger in the house." (1.) Taine explains that this was not the result of unkindness, but of household oversight, dissipation, and disorder - attention being directed elsewhere than toward the home. As to the girls, they were placed in convents, that their parents be relieved of their care, and be in a position to enjoy greater freedom.

The spirit of education was everywhere the same. Social intercourse is man's *raison d'être*. Children are born and must be prepared only for participation therein. Even to the last years of the ancient regime (to 1789) little boys have their hair powdered, perfumed and curled. They wear the sword, frill,

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1. Ibid. - p. 136

and coat with gilded cuffs. They carry the chapeau under an arm. They kiss young ladies' hands with the air of little dandies. A maid of six is bound up in a whalebone waist; her large hoop-petticoat supports a skirt covered with wreaths; she wears on her head a skillful combination of false curls, puffs, and knots, fastened with pins and crowned with plumes - and so high that frequently the chin is the half-way point between the top of her coiffure and her feet. She is a miniature lady - and knows it. She is fully prepared for her role by force of habit. Her unique, her perpetual instruction is concentrated upon her deportment; "it may be said with truth that the fulcrum of education in this country is the dancing-master.....Along with graces of attitude and gesture, they (the children) already have those of the mind and of expression. Scarcely is their tongue loosened when they speak the polished language of their parents. The latter amuse themselves with them and use them as pretty dolls."

The brothers Edmond and Jules de Goncourt describe the woman of the eighteenth century (1.): what she was and what was expected of her. Above all, they declare, the woman must be attractive. "An ugly woman is a creature who has no station in nature, nor a place in the (social) world." Unattractive women, especially those who had been disfigured by small-pox (then a frightful, largely uncontrolled disease), sought refuge and an asylum in a convent. Society's demand for beauty in woman was inexorable.

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1. La femme au dix-huitième siècle



Voluptuousness was the ruling spirit of the eighteenth century; the source of its charm, its very soul. "The century breathes voluptuousness, it exudes voluptuousness from its pores. La volupté est l'air dont il se nourrit et qui l'anime. Elle est son atmosphère et son souffle. Elle est son élément et son inspiration, sa vie et son génie. Elle circule dans son cœur dans ses veines, dans sa tête. Voluptuousness spreads enchantment in the century's tastes, in its habits, customs, works." (1.)

Woman was nothing but the personification of this quality. Adorned by it, she found it everywhere about her. It reflected her image from all sides; before her eyes it multiplied gallant forms as a chamber of mirrors. Her senses at every moment of her day were besieged by its manifestations. Everything with which she came into contact was colored by it.

The eighteenth century eventually cast off the deterrents of sense of shame and modesty. It boastfully suppressed the exaggerated and affected politeness it had inherited from seventeenth century preciosity, the practice of which had brought Voltaire to utter his mocking epithet: *ils* are the whipped cream of Europe. With the new lover there is no more mystery. The gallant has his lackeys strike with resounding force upon the door of his mistress. She is awoken, and he leaves his equipage at the door, to boast publicly of his good fortune.

The fallen woman would take her paramour to the opera, by way of announcing their liaison, in accordance with recognized

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1. Ibid. - p. 151



custom.

'Under the pressure of the craving for amusement, as under the sculptor's thumb, the mask of the century was transformed, and insensibly lost its seriousness; the starched features of the courtier (cf. court of Louis XIV) changed, at first into the smiling grimace of the worldling, and then, the smile fading away on the lips, we behold the shameless leer of the reprobate.' (1.)

In a short time disillusion set in. These women had loved not with the heart but with the head. Love had become a curiosity of the mind, libertinage of the rational faculty. It appeared to be a searching for happiness, or at least a pursuit of an imagined pleasure, necessity for which torments, and the illusion of which leads one astray, as a mirage. Instead of yielding the satisfaction of carnal love and thereby binding the individual to a sensual life, this love fille her with restlessness, drives her from one essai to another, from one tentative to another. It is an unattainable ideal, an implied prevarication, arising from the tendency of social developments.

Thus the greatest scandals, the greatest outbursts of love, are impulses of mental origin, characterized by a motive divorced from the sensual - Vanity.

Conjugal love was held in disrepute. It was considered a ridiculous affair, the manifestation of a weakness beneath the well-born and the cultured; something invented for the peasantry, and of a nature to compromise the reputation of a man or woman

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1. Taine - op. cit. - p. 156

of fashion. Aristocratic husbands and wives retained a mutual cold detachment: each enjoyed the pleasant intimacy of an ice-pack.

Extremely significant, however, is the dominating influence of woman in eighteenth century French politics. She is the governing principle, the directing reason, the commanding voice. She is the universal and fatal cause, the origin of events, the source of things. Her imagination sits at the council table. According to the fancy of her tastes, sympathies, antipathies, she dictates internal and foreign policy. She gives her instructions to the ministers, she inspires the ambassadors. She imposes on them her ideas, her desires, her very law.

Europe followed the lead (insofar as this was compatible with her various national temperaments) of the French. "Paris is the school-house of Europe, a school of urbanity to which the youth of Russia, Germany, and England resort to become civilized." (1.)

This vanished world lives in the pictures and engravings of Watteau, Fragonard, and the St. Aubins; and in the novels and dramas of Voltaire and Marivaux, Collé and Crébillon fils.

Nature, to the aristocracy of the eighteenth century, was a matter of art, something to be found in its crude state under the open sky, and brought to perfection under the hands of the skilled artisan. Pierre Lavedan, in an article published in the Annales de l'Université de Paris, describes the artificial patterns forced upon trees and shrubs on the estates of the wealthy. He declares

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1. Taine - op. cit. - p. 139

that the eighteenth century was completely dominated by a single moral idea: Affirmation of man's power over nature; imposition of the human will upon nature. He indicates that this is related to man's obsession for imposing his will upon himself (as witness, for example, the artificiality of custom). Again, true sunshine to them consisted of candlelight, and the finest sky a painted ceiling.

Ultimately, indifference sets in. The protracted regime of self-indulgence, the search for distractions and diversions, and the scorn for profound sentiment eventuated in the production of a cold, hard shell which effectively eliminated all joy in life from man's experience. The women who made of social gallantry an obligation were the first to realize its deceptiveness, and to pine for the communicative warmth of powerful sentiment.

The stage is set for Jean-Jacques Rousseau.



## TENETS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ROUSSEAU

Rebellion is the soil in which Rousseau cultivated all his ideological plants; irrigated with the warm tears of sentimentalism. Friedrich Paulsen describes him as "one of the greatest rebels that ever lived." (1.) He rebelled against his whole age and all that it regarded as true and great; against its institutions and habits of life, its ideas and standards of value. "With the whole rebellious pride of <sup>the</sup> proletarian suddenly aroused to self-consciousness, he took his stand against the whole world of glitter and pretence, of lies and superficiality. The same rebellion was forced upon his readers by his passionate words, breaking forth from the depths of a wounded soul."

Setting himself up for an avenger of justice, he declared that everything on earth had become bad and corrupt through the unnatural evolution of society. He denounced royalty, nobility, etiquette, the arts and sciences; he attacked the very foundation of society - the right of private property. (2.)

"His bitter, sneering condemnation of the corrupt, hypocritical, fashionable life of the time with the distorting, debasing, and dehumanizing notions of education, and his eloquent plea for a return to a life truly and simply human, and to an education based upon the principles of human nature and calculated to prepare for such a life were righteous and well-timed." (3.) The Third state was coming forth out of the shadow,

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1. Paulsen - op. cit. - p. 151

2. Sarafian - op. cit. - p. 82

3. Lys - op. cit. - p. 122

the children of the bourgeoisie, the masses, were becoming the rivals of the members of the clergy and the nobility. The blossoming of a new era was becoming daily more manifest, and already there had appeared in seed those principles that were to blossom in 1789. (1.)

According to Faulstich and Wright, Rousseau predicted a civilization to consist in the development and perfection of man's natural gifts and powers. Although Rousseau himself did not specifically and clearly conceive such a thesis and support it logically and consistently, I am inclined to agree that it sums up the notions and feelings that Jean-Jacques expressed on the subject.

Among the most fertile grounds for dispute willed to posterity by Rousseau is the matter of nature, the natural man in particular. What did Jean-Jacques say; what is the meaning of what he said; and how does it compare with what he intended it to mean and with what men have taken it to mean?

A 'consistent embodiment of inconsistencies', Rousseau said many things and later contradicted them. Brédif scathingly remarks: If the contradictory ideas of Rousseau were juxtaposed, his thesis and antithesis would almost balance. He attempted unsuccessfully to reconcile his ideas with himself, hence his inability to derive a specific set of principles and express them with any effective degree of clarity and coherence. "In our opinion," writes Brédif, "Rousseau has contradicted himself often, but not often enough." (2.)

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1. Buffenoir - op. cit. - p. 63

2. Brédif - op. cit. - p. 102



On the other hand, Professor Wright of Columbia accounts for the difficulty of comprehending Jean-Jacques, and explains what he "really did mean."

The difficulty found in understanding what Rousseau had to say lies not in his stylistic obscurity or philosophic profundity. The fault lies in the fact that he was a poet-philosopher, and "every so often the poet in him traverses the philosopher to our confusion." (1.) To complicate matters even further, "Rousseau has the dubious gift of epigram, and loves to fling off now and then a kind of paradox that remains unforgettable when all the context that explains and mitigates it is forgotten." (2.)

His thought is not the product of a preconceived system, but it "grew and gathered in his reveries like a flowing river, fed by many - often adventitious tributaries." (3.)

Forse that this difficulty is the unwillingness on the part of critics to study Rousseau objectively. There are very few studies that treat him impartially and in a true, unbiased critical light.

Rousseau's fundamental doctrine is: man is good: men are evil - nature is wholesome; society corrupts it. Nature is right, and all the art that aids man to fulfill her purposes is also right; the art that urges us to other ends is wrong.

Man is natural as long as he is true to his own nature. This is what Rousseau meant. And, in the eyes of Rousseau, it

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1. Meaning of Rousseau - Wright - p.3
  2. Ibidem
  3. Ibid. - p. 4



is the opposite of what the world was bent on doing. It is the spirit of Rousseau, not his letter, which is the important consideration.

Robert Shafer has published the opinion (1.) that Professor Wright's book does not make good its claim; that it is the work of a man who has come to idolize his subject.

Rousseau first published his ideas on the natural man, with detailed description, in the Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes (On the origin of inequality among men).

The natural man rests in the shade of an oak, slakes his thirst at the nearest brook, and makes his bed beneath the same tree that supplied his meal. He lives alone. He is physically robust and vigorous. All savages are robust and vigorous. Nature disposes quickly of those who are not so. Old savages, no longer able to sustain the burden of life, die practically unnoticed by their associates, and almost without realizing themselves that they are leaving the world.

The natural man finds his modest needs close at hand. He has no ambition, foresight, curiosity. He has not the wit to stand in awe before the greatest marvels. His unagitated soul devotes itself exclusively to the question of actual existence in the present moment, with no concern for the future. He has no duty or moral obligation. Morality has not yet been conceived. He lives alone, except during those periods when epigamic in-

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1. The Bookman - August, 1930

pulses drive him to seek temporary companionship - and once his need is satisfied, he immediately seeks solitude.

There is no education, no progress. Savages are unaware of love, hence their lack of appreciation of beauty. Savages, living alone, do not speak, hence they need no wit. The various accidents leading to the rise of man's mental powers lead to man's sociability - and to evil.

I have above made a laconic summary of Rousseau's natural man in a state of nature, as described and explained in the Discourse on Inequality. The facts are reported accurately. Nothing further is required to account for and justify the mocking laughter and ridicule to which Rousseau was subjected on publishing this essay. His words are eloquent. They are unequivocal. They mean what they say.

Any number of interpretations - metaphysical, cabalistic, intuitive, scientific, and the like - may be made. But I see no reason for such. Rousseau spoke for himself. He spoke, I am convinced, with profound sincerity. His words came from his heart.

Are they found to lack logic, when he urged the world to return to this kind of "natural-manism"? Do they lay him open to scoffers who call him childish, fantastic, absurd? Nonetheless they are the words, the ideas he expressed with his own pen and without deference to external pressure of any sort. He had experienced society and recorded his reactions.

To go on: Man in a state of nature is good. Man among men,



man in a civil state, is bad. Society is founded ultimately on property rights. This we read in Part Two of the same Discourse. The first man who fenced in a section of land and said, "This is mine", and who found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society.

The one contribution of real, inherent significance (not considering the effect of Rousseau's passionate eloquence, for the moment) in the Discourse occurs in the dedication, where he explains that the good society is governed by laws to which every man in that society must submit - even the administrators and executives of the law. But, lest credit be over-hasty to perch on his shoulder for this idea, I must reiterate the constantly cited fact that none of Rousseau's ideas are original with him. They had all been developed and published and republished long before he included them in his works.

Rousseau denounced civilization and science and art and culture and progress. And was awarded a prize for so doing. (1.) He opened that epoch-making article as follows: "has the revival of the sciences and arts contributed to purify or to corrupt morals? That is the problem to be examined. That side should I take in this question? That one, gentlemen, which is compatible with an honest man who knows nothing, and who esteems himself none the less for it." The confession of ignorance would be Socratic, except that, since it comes from the pen of Jean-Jacques and since it is intended literally, it bears the

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1. Discourse on the effect on morals of the advancement of the arts and sciences - 1750.



varnish of Rousseauistic pride, the gilt of Romantic egotism. In the words which I have underlined I read: Since I know nothing, I am perfectly qualified to express my views on the question, and they must be esteemed. My ignorance is undisputable proof of the fact that I am completely unprejudiced, utterly without partiality. Hence my preëminence as judge!

Science and art have cooperated to bring man to a deplorable state. They have twined flowery garlands about the iron which burden men, smothering in them the sentiment of that original liberty for which they seemed to have been born; caused them to love their servitude; and formed thereby what are called civilized peoples. Oh, contented slaves! cultivate the throne, raised by necessity and supported by the arts and sciences. It is to the throne that you are indebted for your delicate tastes, your gentility, urbanity, your facile social intercourse - in a word, all the appearance of the virtues in their actual existence. (1.)

How pleasant life would be among us, were the exterior countenance always a true mirror of the heart's internal dispositions! But no. Virtue can never march abreast with pomp. Before art fashioned our manners and taught our passions to speak an artificial tongue, our customs were rustic, but natural. There rules now over our customs a vile uniformity, compelling all minds to appear to have been cast in the same mold. Consider the effect of this situation. No longer do we have sincere friendship, true esteem, profound confidence. Mediocrity,

fears, coldness, reserve, hatred, betrayal - these are the qualities lurking beneath that glittering spell of uniformity, beneath the perfidy of politeness, beneath the vaunted urbanity that we owe to the lights of our century. This is the purity our customs have acquired; it is thus we have become people of consequence.

"Our souls have become corrupted in proportion as our sciences and arts have advanced toward perfection." (1.) It was inevitable, as history proves with copious example.

"Know ye, O men, once and for all, that nature has wished to preserve you from knowledge, as a mother snatches away a dangerous weapon from the hands of her child; know ye all that all the secrets she hides from you are so many evils from which she is protecting you." (2.) The pain experienced in learning attests this fact.

The arts and sciences are instruments of wickedness and corruption. Astronomy is born of superstition; eloquence, of ambition, hatred, flattery, lying; geometry, of avarice; physics, of a vain curiosity; all, in sum, even ethics, are born of human pride. They owe their birth to our vices.

In reflecting upon our situation, one cannot resist the temptation of recalling the image of the simpliciter of the aboriginal era. It is a lovely bank, adorned by the unaided hand of nature, toward which one constantly turns his eyes, and which

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1. Ibid. - p. 12

2. Ibid.---p. 21



one leaves with the keenest regret. (1.)

One school of critics will delight in dissecting Rousseau's logic, in analysing his style, and pointing out his irrational outlook, his poorly expressed ideas (in terms of a scientific, straight-forward problem - solution). Another school will move heaven and earth to extract gems of wisdom from his works, and exalt his name as the emancipator of humanity.

With few exceptions, notably Mrs. McDonald and Hippolyte Buffenoir, critics are generally agreed that Rousseau's personality was not conducive to the establishment of a large number of close friendships among his associates, normal friendships among men, and that his moral code was quite a hideous reflection of his personality. It is my opinion on this point that Rousseau's logic or lack of logic is of little moment. And that his evil conduct, his villainess, does not call for hatred, scorn, or denunciation - but rather for pity. Rousseau was weak physically, psychically, morally, mentally. It is this fundamental and all-embracing weakness from which sprang all that made Rousseau different from other men, and which has brought it about that the name Rousseau came down through the ages as the Father of Democracy, the Father of Modern Education, and the like. I am convinced that most of the glory attributed to Rousseau is ill-advised, misdirected.

The one original contribution of Jean-Jacques is heated passion in rebellion. His words inflamed a nation, indeed, a

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1. Ibid. - p. 30



whole civilization. Those words delivered no new, unique message. They expressed borrowed ideas. They raised issues and contradicted them. They crystallized the latent feelings of the century--and brought the precipitation down to explode the old regime. It made not a whit of difference what Rousseau said. Dissatisfaction was his inspiration. Dissatisfaction colored his every idea, his every feeling. Dissatisfaction is what he expressed. He took exception to everything: men, himself, government, life, love, progress.

Dissatisfaction was latent in French atmosphere. The brothers de Goncourt show how the women are dissatisfied with the artificial glitter of society, their own handiwork. They yearn for a "New Deal", where they may once again enjoy expressions of true sentiment, where they may cast off artificiality and constant pretense. Taine shows how the clergy has become corrupt, how the nobility has become an empty bauble, a "whipped cream", and how the masses, the lesser clergy, and the lesser nobility have suffered all they intended to suffer and have reached the saturation point. The world is dissatisfied. Rousseau appears. He molds their dissatisfaction with the tools of a Vulcan. He flaunts it tauntingly beneath their noses, he prods them with it. Voilà! They take him to their hearts; they raise him to their shoulders and proclaim his genius.

But again I would express a contrary opinion. Rousseau did, it is true, put into words the feelings of the eighteenth century. But I give him no credit for that, for the reason that he was not consciously a poet, he was not expressing what he knew to be other

people's emotions, he was not animated by an inner urge to lead the people out of their Egypt and to a better, a promised land of milk and honey. He was, I say, not aware of the significance of his doctrine until after he had published his first essay. He was essentially a small man, unaware of anything but his own appetites--and interested in nothing but these appetites.

I first experienced this attitude toward Rousseau when I read the Confessions. This opinion was confirmed on reading the prize essay and the discourse on inequality. And I find what I consider to clinch the proof in the paragraph entitled Avertissement, which is to be found introducing the prize essay in the Oeuvres. (1) The lines are from Rousseau's own pen:

"What is celebrity? Here is the unfortunate work to which I owe mine. It is certain that this piece, which was worth a prize to me, and which has made a name for me, is absolutely mediocre, and I dare add it is one of the most insignificant in this collection. What a whirlpool of misery should I have avoided if this first essay had received only the consideration it deserved! But it was fated that a reputation unjustly favorable bring upon me suffering that is even more so."

Here we have the wail of poor, weak Rousseau, realizing in later years, after having received chastisement upon both cheeks, that he had been carried through life on winds of chance, that he had been to no appreciable degree the master of his fate, the captain of his soul, and letting fall on the past a sweet tear of melancholy--of dissatisfaction.

It was surely by chance that he wrote the Discours on the



effect upon morality of the progress of the arts and sciences. When chance procured the prize for him, and made him overnight a prominent figure, an esteemed philosopher, a vox populi, his weakness, his infinite egotism caused him to ride the wave of popularity with exquisite glee--and squires about on the crest of that wave, and contort himself so that he might maintain his position on it, regardless of consequences.

Very commonly, among children, an individual will be brought into the eye of his assembled playmates and, enjoying the taste of publicity, will proceed to "show off". This procedure shortly carries itself to an extreme and the clown is ridiculed until a fight ensues, that he may repair his damaged reputation; or he decides, "I won't play with you any more; I have better toys in my own yard, and won't let you play with them. I'll play alone." Rousseau was a child. When his "showing off" brought unpleasant reactions, he withdrew into his own "back yard". For him to strive to repair his reputation was utterly out of the question. He found solace in the thought that society, which had struck him on both cheeks, was wicked for such unpardonable conduct, and, since he knew he was imutably good, decided to retire within himself and not allow the world to intrude upon his "better toys" and his ideal playground. He sought refuge in his dream paradise, his kingdom of the imagination. And he stayed there.

Brédif, who pounces upon Rousseau and ruthlessly tears aside his cloak to reveal all that he considers vile and condemnable, ceases, for a moment, to admit that Rousseau dared to say aloud what



others thought in silence. (1) I say that Rousseau dared to speak because he was expressing his feelings about his own personal situation, and was unaware of the cosmic significance and universal applicability of his words. When he later did become aware of his situation in relation to general social conditions on his stratum, he was weak enough to let his momentum bear him onward. Then he wept about the whole matter and recorded another blow from the social hand.

John Morley suggests another fact to account for Rousseau's anti-social position. Rousseau suffered from a very painful physical ailment. "Pain such as he endured was enough to account, not for his unsociability, which flowed from temperament, but for the bitter, irritable, and suspicious form which this unsociability now first assumed." (2) Insanity followed, Morley continues; "the product of intellectual excitation, public persecution, and moral reaction after prolonged tension."

Irving Babbitt strikes a piercing note in Literature and the American College when he says, (3) "It has been said that a system of philosophy is often only a gigantic scaffolding that a man erects to hide from himself his own favorite sin. Rousseau's whole system sometimes strikes one as intended to justify his own horror of every form of discipline and constraint." This system is effectively epitomized as follows: No man has any natural authority over his fellow men. (4)

Aside from political inferences, Rousseau's attitude toward

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1. Bredif--op. cit.--p. 176
  2. Morley--op. cit.--Vol. 1-p. 271
  3. Babbitt--op. cit.--p. 49
  4. Social Contract--p. 104

nature has left a strong impress on man's appreciation for a natural beauty. Lowell describes Rousseau's influence here as "a sensibility to the picturesque in Nature, not with Nature as a strengthener and consoler, a wholesome tonic for a mind ill at ease with itself, but with Nature as a kind of feminine echo to the mood, flattering it with sympathy rather than correcting it with rebuke or lifting it away from its unmanly depression, as in the wholesomeness or fellow-feeling of Wordsworth. They (the followers of Rousseau) see in her an accessory, and not a reproof." (1)

Professor Rice approaches Rousseau's Nature from a different angle. (2) He takes the position that the normal background for a study of Rousseau's "return to nature" is to be sought in the poetry of the pastoral tradition. Against this background Rousseau's personal and lyrical power will stand out in clearest relief, and will merit the most accurate views of his originality. That originality consisted in his looking upon nature with his own eyes, whereas other poets looked upon nature with their well-schooled wits.

This latter approach is safe, and the opportunity for violent contention is reduced to an inconsiderable minimum. Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged that Rousseau was a great poet. Considered from this angle, Jean-Jacques may well be lauded for his original genius.

Education (3) carries an article by Margaret Chaghtlin entitled What Two Sentimentalists Did for Children which credits Rousseau with the great contribution of asking people exchange their concept of 'birth in original sin' to that of the 'pure birth' of children.

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1. Lowell-op-cit.- p. 263
  2. Rousseau and the Poetry of Nature in 18th Century France
  3. November, 1932



R. H. Quick (1) stresses Rousseau's contribution to education not as a creator, but as the mouthpiece for ideas already recognized in his period. His important work, says Quick, centered about the two ideas of studying the child, and revising classroom methods to conform with natural tendencies and processes.

Emile is the work in which Rousseau expressed his opinions on the question of education. Morley describes this treatment as "perhaps the most elevated and spiritual of all the productions of the prolific genius of France in the eighteenth century." (2)

Emile is not an objective consideration of the problems besetting an educator. It is not an orderly, logical, exhaustive treatment, nor is it, on Rousseau's own confession, anything but a record of his subjective opinions, occasionally supported by observation; and written as a novel. Again, it is not the facts he presents that created the great stir, but the manner of their presentation, his literary, poetic style.

Jean-Jacques opens the treatise Emile, or On Education, with the statement that the important element in the work is the fact that it draws public attention to its subject: and that, even if his ideas be poor, if he at least inspires good ideas in others, his work will not have been in vain. He admits that he may be on the wrong track in his methods, but insists that he certainly did have an accurate view of the problem. It is this: Infancy is misunderstood

The opening sentence of Emile reads: All is good as it leaves the hands of the Creator: all degenerates in the hands of man.

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1. Essays on Educational Reformers
  2. Morley--op. cit.--Vol II-p. 2



can contorts, mixes, upsets, confuses, distorts, disfigures everything. He loves deformity, has a passion for monstrosities. He imposes his distorting will upon everything.

Rousseau applies his doctrines of liberty and sentimentalism to the new-born child and carries them through during the child's entire lifetime. Newborn children are crippled by overzealous nurses, who bind them in tight swaddling-clothes. The child's first impression, his first experience in life, is one of constraint, of unhappiness. His first gift is chains; his first treatment a torment. Nothing is left free but his voice: and it is used for complaint. You, reader, would complain even more vociferously!

Whence comes this unreasonable custom? From the fact that mothers became unwilling to nurse their children, and hired the services of strangers. Wet-nurses see the greatest return for the least work. Free children require constant supervision; bound children may be left in a corner. Do our sweet mothers realize the torture of infants in the care of paid nurses? Can they remain indifferent? The nurse will hang the child, wrapped up in a bundle, to the wall, and forget about him, since he utters no cry. He is unaware that his face is purple and that his lungs, squeezed as they are, cannot produce a cry. There he hangs, practically crucified!

Beside from the physical advantages in nursing one's own children, there are the psychological, the psychical benefits. Our families no longer consist of father, mother, brothers and sisters, but are mere groups of selfish individualists, each sufficient unto himself. The house is cold. One must seek

pleasure elsewhere. But let mothers undertake their natural functions, and the house becomes metamorphosed into a home. The child's needs render the mother more vital; unite mother and father more closely, more dearly. Once wives become true mothers, husbands will not tarry in becoming true fathers.

Emile makes veritably delightful reading. Rousseau has obviously pondered the subject and, although he has not the capacity for scholarly exercise of the logical faculties, he has a kind of native shrewdness. He expresses himself as though in conversation with a close friend. He recognizes his failings, confesses them, and obviously leaves nothing more to be done. And we, the reading public, recognize his defects, but do not let them blind us to the truth of what he confides in us. We are vividly aware of his genuine sincerity. We feel strongly drawn to him, in spite of our different temperaments. There is no occasion to wonder at the enormous influence he exerted upon the women of his period. While reading Emile, all thought of what Jean-Jacques actually was retires in deference to the picture of the Jean-Jacques that stands off behind the lines on the pages. This Jean is morally pure, respectable, infinitely amiable.

He takes a long-winded review of nutrition, and concludes that the vegetarian diet is best. He forbids the mother to use medical service. He advocates a free, open life in natural scenes. Dr. J. L. Moreau takes up the pen in combat, and



arraigns Rousseau for his refusal to countenance inoculation. (1) The doctor makes an exhaustive study, also, of the advisability of universal nursing by mothers. Sometimes, he points out, it is bad policy.

"Hush!" thunders Jean-Jacques, (2) "be human; it is your first duty." 'Love infancy.' In a gentler vein he continues: 'Who among you has never regretted, at some time, that age of constant laughter, of constant peace of soul? Why should you despoil infants of the happiest period in their life? Why should you fill with bitterness and tears these first short years that will never more return? Half of our children die during their first few years of life. Fathers! Do you know the moment when death will claim your infants? Do not prepare regrets for your future by removing from them the few short moments nature grants them. At whatever moment when the Lord may recall them, let them be prepared to go, having tasted and enjoyed life.' Here Rousseau speaks with the passion of his own bitter experience, with the profound tremor of the man suffering from a vicious complex. Whether or not the reader agrees with Rousseau's stand, he is at least aware of a spirit of unselfishness on the part of Rousseau, a desire to help, to offer suggestions that will, if applied, make life more worth living.

Rousseau advocates a sincere morality, an ethical standard that is acceptable to any honest society in any country. Its failing is that it may be too ideal, unattainable by a whole group. He

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1. Moreau--op. cit.--p. 36
  2. Emile--p. 113-Vol. I



advocates true respect and consideration for women. He adheres to a "woman's place in the home" philosophy which, while it may not be entirely accredited today, is on an unassailably high moral level. And, to indulge in an aside, I might add that many a man--and woman, too--secretly places his personal stamp of approval on the idea.

"Women of Paris and of London: I supplicate your pardon... If a single one among you has the soul of a true lady, then I don't know anything about our institutions." (1) In the big cities depravity begins at birth; in small cities it comes with the advent of reason. 'Lives there a man with so dead a soul that he is not virtually inspired at the mere presence of a pure maid? The chaste woman beholds the world at her feet. She triumphs over all--her-self included.'

Time and again critics have condemned and exposed to ridicule the specific educational doctrines of Rousseau. Once more I contend that these matters of practical application are of little import, insofar as Rousseau has expressed them. The important thing is that he forcibly called public attention to education, to the state of childhood. This attention once aroused, capable professional men undertook to solve the problems. Rousseau's contribution consists in his having made society aware of a number of needs, and bringing this awareness about so forcibly as to cause society to take active measures to improve the situation.

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1. Emile--Vol. II-p. 292

Consider the influence of Rousseau: Dresses à la Jean-Jacques Rousseau became the vogue, expressing symbolically the principles he postulated. Head-dresses were adorned with "puffs au sentiment" in which were placed the portrait of one's daughter, mother, canary, or dog; the whole garnished with the hair of one's father or most intimate friend. Wives for the first time appeared in public with their husbands; mothers began to nurse their infants; fathers began to take an interest in the education of their children. There arose a disposition to drop excessive pre-occupation with self and try to make others happy, to become beneficent and warm-hearted. (1)

Rousseau the arch-sophist, as he is referred to by Robert Shafer, was the champion of the cause of liberty. His arguments in favor of his views, and the arguments that he used to beat down all opposition, have left him prey to all sorts of conflicting and contradictory interpreters. One school will state dogmatically that Rousseau advocated unlimited libertinism, licentiousness. Another will argue equally dogmatically that Rousseau's liberty extends the designation of man's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Both schools, and most others, are equally right, and, I should add, all wrong. Rousseau was not aware of the broad applicability of his words. He spoke for no people, no masses, but for just one individual: for Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He used his own method for proclaiming his dissatisfaction. He was taken too seriously.

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1. Taine--op. cit.--pp. 161-163

Today the man who thrusts his hand into his bosom and proclaims himself to be none other than the great Napoleon is unceremoniously placed where he can do no harm. Rousseau was taken seriously.



## INFLUENCE OF ROMANISM ON GERMANY

Germany was stirred even more than France, by the works of Rousseau. (1) Irving Babbitt attributes this influence largely to the fact that the Germans found in him a brilliant literary expression of what was already latent in themselves.

German social leaders had long been looking to Paris for not only their inspiration, but for literal, complete codes of social intercourse, which they adopted bodily and without adaptation to suit their different temperaments. Then, of course, the inspiring lower strata looked to the upper levels for their codes, and thus we find all social activity which made any pretense to being fashionable and modish in Germany cramped and constricted to fit the un-German, artificial fashions of Paris. Mac. de Lisle describes the Germans as "generally a sincere and loyal people" (2) who avoid deception. But they have a rather strong inclination toward emulation of foreigners. This being the case, it is inevitable that a reaction set in, making a decided break away from the foreign influence.

Such a break occurred among the youth of Germany, reaching violent manifestations in the Strassburg University student group, of which the young Goethe was a member. The "Storm and Stress" movement was born with the decision of these young men to turn their backs on France and affectation and classicism. "The watchwords of the party were nature, originality, youth, the worship of Shakespeare, rebellion against convention, and the right of genius to live its

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1. Paulsen--op. cit.--p. 157

2. de l'Allemagne--p. 17

own life. It is given to everyone to hope that on some one point he too may be a genius. The youth of Germany at all events had little hesitation as to their claim, and, supposing that to be original was to be eccentric, and to be a poet was to be sentimental, they launched out into long hair and nakedness, moonbeams and feudal castles, suicide and glooms of blighted love, till of them, too, the earth was at length weary." (1)

In their violent espousal of principles of extreme license, Rousseau furnished them with able leadership. Predominantly, however, it was his "return to nature" slogan that influenced Germany most profoundly.

Describing Rousseau's effect on Germany in more general terms, Frich Schmidt (2) quotes from A. W. Rehberg's letter to Tieck: "Es ward erlaubt, Gedanken laut werden zu lassen, die man einst (? nicht ?) gewagt hatte sich selbst klar zu machen; Gesinnungen zu äussern, die man sich selbst nicht hatte gestehn dürfen. Bald wird es etwas Schönes, dieses alles zur Schau zu tragen." (Freedom of speech is acknowledged by society, and soon it becomes fashionable to express thoughts that one formerly hastened to suppress even in his own mind.) Rousseau lifted the spiritual ban that was so oppressive to the German genius. His cry for nature was the "Losung der Gährenden Zeit", the battle-cry for the fermenting period.

Professor Schmidt exposes the heart of the matter when he points

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1. Mevinson--op. cit.--p. 169
  2. Schmidt--op. cit--p. 115



cut the accuracy of Herberg in the latter's conclusion that "no single work of Rousseau carried the predominant influence, nor can the influence of any of the works, taken separately, be considered effective to any notable degree--it was the whole spirit of the total sum of the writings that carried the era. (1.) Germany awaited not a Voltaire, but a Rousseau: not reason, but passion. Schmidt further explains that Rousseau is much less French in temperament than is Voltaire. On this score, Joseph Texte maintains that Rousseau is essentially more German than French in his native inclinations and tendencies.

Fichte attributes to the spirit of eighteenth century Germany the appellation "Egoismus". (2.) He explained that people lacked "Gemeininteresse", a dynamic communal and political interest; they lacked a clear "Umsicht" and "verständiges Urteil." They all turned their glances to their own selfish ends only. But now, with the advent of Rousseauism, new demands are made of men; and new norms are used in measuring character. "Seelische Reicheit", a delicate sensibility, as a source of beautiful thoughts, supersedes the dominance of a cold rationalism.

Professor Schmidt indicates the extreme to which this movement led: The joy of grief goes hand in hand with delicate sensibility. Sensitive friends (men and women) invited one another to evenings devoted to kisses and tears.

Essentially it was Rousseau's doctrines calling men to the natural life, to participation in nature, that took profound

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1. Ibidem.

2. Ibid. - p. 157



effect. Goethe was inspired to take excessively cold baths and other unhealthful "hardening processes". He, and the numerous others who followed such practices, believed that through these activities they would approach nature more intimately and be withdrawn from the ill effects of convention.

Rousseau is counted a major source of inspiration for the "Sturm und Drang" movement. It was largely under the influence of Herder that these 'stormers and stressers' turned to Jean-Jacques for their shibboleth and war-cry: Nature! It was definitely Herder who called Rousseau to Goethe's attention. Georg Brandes asserts that Goethe could not have written his Leiden des jungen Werthers if Rousseau had not previously produced his La Nouvelle Héloïse. (1.) Herder was so thoroughly instilled with the Rousseau-spirit that much of it was passed on to his fiancée, who learned French expressly so that she might read the Héloïse.

In regard to the evaluation of Rousseau's influence upon Herder, Dr. Otto Münzel of Leipzig has published a very helpful article entitled Der Einfluss Rousseaus auf die philosophisch-pädagogischen Anschauungen Herders. This article opens with a picture of the Rousseau-Herder situation as German critics have analyzed it. Hettner considers Rousseau's influence on Herder to be very great. Hays considers it a very minor influence. Renner, Kluge, Harres, and Mittel agree with Hettner. Kötz, Geferstein, Langgarten, Lindemann, and Richter side with Hays. We shall consider the evidence on either side and seek the

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1. Brandes - *op. cit.* - Vol. 1 - p. 214

more probable conclusion.

In 1762 Herder enrolled at the University of Jena, and became an ardent disciple of "the sage of Königsburg, Emanuel Kant." Kant, we recall, was so regular in his habits that the inhabitants of the city were accustomed to set their clocks on his appearance in the street, going to or coming from his classes. One morning a miracle occurred. Kant was late. Emile had caused him to spoil his record. Hence Dr. Hänszel infers that Herder studied Emile very carefully. This inference is made a fact by a study of Herder's notebooks.

However, Herder did not accept Rousseau with uncritical enthusiasm. When his fiancée wrote him: "O me he (Rousseau) is a saint, a prophet, whom I all but worship," he cautioned her against an unconditional acceptance of those doctrines Rousseau stresses.

The chief and incontestable merit of Rousseau and his effect upon pedagogy, declares Hänszel, consists in his emphasis on:

1. The care of sucklings, so terribly neglected until he appeared in the public eye.
2. Child-study
3. The stage-sequence in the psychic development of children
4. Mental culture
5. Consideration of sentiment
6. Realia, with reference to the goal of formal education.

Herder is more universal in his interests than Rousseau, especially inasmuch as Rousseau avoided history and philosophy, whereas Herder stressed these fields.

As Rousseau stands for nature, so Herder stands for humanity. As Rousseau is concerned with the individual, so Herder studies the race. Babbitt offers illuminating testimony



in this connection. (1) "He (Herder) probably did more than any other man of his time to promote a sympathetic and imaginative interpretation of the past, and prepare the way for the triumph of that historical method which has proved so powerful a solvent of both Christian and classical dogma."

Herder transfers to the nation the idea of organic growth and development that Rousseau had employed in his Emile to revolutionize the education of the individual child. He dwells with particular interest on the origins of nationalities,--especially of his own nationality,--and idealizes this first age of spontaneity and instinct such as Rousseau had exalted childhood as the Golden Age of the individual. (2)

Herder agrees with Rousseau that man is a feeling creature. But Herder expressed his stand specifically on this issue by saying: A man who means to be nothing but Head is a monster, just as is he who means to be nothing but Heart; the complete man is both, with both in proper proportion, and each in its place.

Herder was "kulturfreundlich", favorably disposed toward culture; Rousseau was "kulturfeindlich", hostilely disposed thereto. Rousseau would do away with text-books. Herder would use them as supplements in the teaching process. Rousseau is narrow, a disintegrating force, radical, historically inaccurate; Herder is versatile, critical, moderate, and historically accurate in his thinking. Herder's philosophy includes a far greater horizon than does that of Rousseau. (3)

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1. Literature and the American College-p. 185
  2. Hanssöl- -op. cit.-p. 105
  3. Ibid-p. 110



Both these men were hypochondriacs, sensitive, capricious, un-aggressive, disorderly, and showed economic inability, ambition, and irresolution. Herder was not completely free of a certain Rousseauistic distrust, ingratitude, and inconsiderateness. Rousseau's break with Voltaire and Diderot has its counterpart in Herder's break with Kant and Goethe. (1) And, relative to cooperative styles, Herder often adopts the Rousseauistic practice of manipulating the reader's emotions rather than directing his logic at the intellect.

Rousseau, concludes Hänsel, was not the exclusive or even the dominant influence upon Herder. Herder has expressed his attitude toward Rousseau as follows: 'I am inclined to think more harshly about Rousseau than one might suppose. At least, I am certainly not a blind Rousseau-ophile to the extent that I might consider him, as do many, a heaven-sent apostle and martyr to human verity. Indeed, it appears to me that he was rather a martyr to his illness, to his philosophic egotism, and his unique anthropophilic-misanthropic caprice.' (2) Herder eulogized Rousseau, however, and showed a strong sympathy for his difficult and unfortunate experiences: 'Rousseau's hatred for the burdens of society and for educated men, his fiery love for an ideal of virtue and integrity, although he blended with them an acidic peculiarity, will always proclaim him a colossus among the authors of our century, whose unfortunate youthful errors and misfortunes had a particularly disastrous effect on his whole life, and brought the blossom of his being to a bitter fruition.'

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1. Ibid-p. 122

2. Ibid-p. 137

Herder's estimate of Rousseau's influence upon him coincides with that of Dr. Wessel: It was small.

Numerous as were the essential elements that the personalities of Rousseau and Herder possessed in common, their differences were nonetheless fundamental. A brief review of a representative selection of Herder's writings will offer specific evidence in support of this opinion.

Herder's Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind) embrace a cosmic system. He begins his study of man with a consideration of the very foundation of the universe. 'In order that our philosophy of the history of the human race may be entitled to that name, it must begin with heaven,' he opens. 'We must conceive of the universe as an organized unit, and the earth a single, small entity therein.'

Humility occupied a major position in Herder's intellect. When he contemplates the immensity, the inconceivable magnitude of the universe, and the laws regulating it, he wonders what his part therein amounts to. Yet he expresses a certain pride in the same breath, when he refers to his mind as "meine Gottnachahrende Vernunft." (1) And again: "The more I notice how every law, every phenomenon proceeds out of One, and serves One in all things, so much the more firmly do I find my fate bound not to the dust of the earth, but to the invisible laws that regulate it.....The force that thins in me, functions within me, is, by its very nature, as eternal a force as that which binds together the sun and the stars."

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1. Herder-op.cit-Vol. IV-p. 15



He takes up a discussion of specific astronomical statistics--the relations of the solar planets to one another, the comparative lengths of their day, and the like.

He sees an inexorable teleological force directing the movement of the universe and all its components. He marvels at the vista of human evolution, the roots of which he finds in the inorganic chaos that provided the fundamentals of our present universe. He goes into considerable detail, relates specific facts, and proceeds in logical order.

Herder's treatment of love is an unique blend of dispassionate science and warm sympathy. Man in love is not merely gratifying his microcosmic impulses, but is furthering the macrocosmic purpose: "Ubekannte Triebe erwachen, von denen die Kindheit nichts wusste. Das Auge des Jünglings belebt sich, seine Stimme sinkt, die Wange des Mädchens färbt sich: zwei Geschöpfe verlangen nach einander und wissen nicht, was sie verlangen: sie schmachten nach Einigung, die ihnen doch die zertrennende Natur versagt hat, und schwimmen in einer Meere der Täuschung. Süßgetäuschte Geschöpfe, genießet eurer Zeit! wisset aber, dass ihr damit nicht eure kleinen Träume, sondern, angenehm gezwungen, die grösste Aussicht der Natur befördert!....Sobald sie (die Natur) das Geschlecht <sup>gesichert</sup> hat, lässt sie allmählich das Individuum sinken." (1)

Herder offers an anthropological account of the significance of the family. He draws an analogy between the early development of the race and childhood. The genesis of the family laid the



foundation of an inevitable society: "Also auch um die Wildheit der (~~den~~) Menschen zu brechen und sie zum häuslichen Umgang zu gewöhnen, sollte die Kindheit unseres Geschlechtes lange Jahre dauern; die Natur zwang und hielt es durch zarte Bande zusammen, dass es sich nicht, wie die bald ausgebildeten Tiere, zerstreuen und vergessen konnte. Nun ward der Vater der Erzieher seines Sohnes, wie die Mutter seine Säugerin gewesen war; und so ward ein neues Glied der Humanität geknüpft. Hier lag nämlich der Grund zu einer notwendigen menschlichen Gesellschaft, ohne die kein Mensch aufwachsen, keine Mehrheit von Menschen sein könnte. Der Mensch ist also zur Gesellschaft geboren; das sagt ihm das Mitgefühl seiner Eltern, das sagen ihm die Jahre seiner langen Kindheit." (1)

A Rousseauistic flavor marks Herder's conception of the true man: "The true man is free, and obeys the laws of nature out of an inner goodness and love: for all natural laws are good, and where he does not perceive them through insight, he learns to follow them in childlike simplicity." (2)

With regard to education, Herder points out that a man becomes truly a man largely through education; not education as it was conceived in the schools of his contemporaneous Germany, where nothing but memorizing was the order of the day, but education in the sense of the Latin educō, - lead forth, draw out. "Was ist's für ein armes Geschöpf, das nichts aus sich selbst hat, das alles durch Vorbild, Lehre, Übung bekommt und, wie ein Wachs, darnach

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1. Ibid-p. 134

2. Ibid-p. 138

Gestalten annimmt!" (1)

Herder is very careful, however, not to allow himself to be carried away by his enthusiasm for the development of latent individual differences. He recognizes the human 'urge for imitation', and compares the human organism to a finely attuned string instrument, prepared to take up sounds and return them through an induced vibration. The child, he asserts, is to a much greater degree comparable to such an instrument; indeed, for that very reason the child should remain for long years a gently "zurückstönendes Saitenspiel", a reëchoing lyre.

Volume six of these Ausgewählte Werke reviews the historical sweep from an ethnological point of view. He is led by his historical study to the conclusion that progress is an integral feature in the cosmic scheme, that progress is constantly pointed forward; that the hands of the clock can never be turned back (as Rousseau would like to turn them.)

"The human race is destined to a procession of scenes, of culture, of customs; woe unto the man dissatisfied with the scene upon which he has come and in which he must function and spend his days!" (2)

A particularly poignant excerpt from Von den Vorteilen und Nachteilen der Heutigen Studiormethode, with particular bearing upon Rousseau is the following: "He who sows not in the spring harvests nought in the fall: he who in youth neglects to exert himself and exercise himself upon studies, languages; who fails to en-

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1. Ibid-Vol. V-p. 56

2. Über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker-Vol III-p. 183



gage in combat with difficulties, with obstacles, and conquer them all - he will receive no recognition in the years of honor, and in his years of rest will be scorned." The natural elements stand in opposition to man that he may struggle with them. All sorts of difficulties are set in his way, that he may overcome them.

"Alles schlägt endlich zum Guten aus". All is for the best. (1)

He exhorts youth to love and practice the ancient languages, for they are the source and model of all that is noble, good, and beautiful; love philosophy, theology, history: they nourish the heart with sensations and fill the mind with great thoughts. The essay closes with a prayer to the Lord, to bless man's striving for 'the good, the true, and the beautiful. Amen.'

Prominent among Herder's contributions is his nationalistic indoctrination. He declared that no greater harm can come to a nation than to have it lose its national character, the peculiarity of its spirit, of its idiom. (2) Germany took him literally, and the Sturm und Drang was born.

Eighteenth century Germans, before Herder, looked upon their native tongue as vulgar, even barbarous. French was used, it being considered the delicate, aristocratic vehicle of culture and breeding. The poet Burkard Jenke satirically illustrates the sprinkling of French terms in German expression for the desired effect of elegance: (3)

Da heisst das andre Wort gloire, renommée,  
Massacre, bel esprit, fier, capricieux; La  
précieuse hat das Deutsche gar verschworen,

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1. Historische Zeitschrift-p. 324
  2. Ueber die neuere deutsche Litteratur, Dritte Sammlung p. 13
  3. Ergänz.-op. cit.-p. 22

Es klingt ja zu sagen in ihren zarten Ohren  
Und kommt nach ihrem goût zu canailleux heraus;  
Ein Wort französisch ziert den ganzen Menschen aus.

This "Gallomania" was prevalent in Germany, from König Friedrich II through the nobility and down to the middle classes. Herder, having been inspired by Rousseau, denounced the artificial culture of his day and recalled his generations to a life closer to the laws of nature. Macaulay recognized the momentous significance of Herder's doctrine when he wrote, in a letter to Napier: "The appearance of this book (*Ideen*) is really an era in the intellectual history of modern Europe." (1)

It must here be pointed out that Herder's nationalism was not that of the late nineteenth century; it was essentially humanitarian; it was built around the principle of the fundamental unity of the whole of mankind. And, carrying this thought a step further, whereas Rousseau is criticized for having confused nature and human nature, Herder's *Ideen* reveal "the profound relationship between nature and the human species." (2)

Herder's greatness, according to Kuno Francke, (3) lies in the "wide range of his vision, in the wonderful universality of his mind, which enabled him to see the interdependence of all things and to divine the unity of all life. It lies, above all, in the manifold application of a single idea, an idea through which he became the father of the modern evolutionary philosophy: the idea of organic growth." Heinrich Kurz adds to this Herder's gift of catching the beautiful and the lofty in whatever form and appearance, with complete

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1. *Ergang*--op. cit.--p. 104
  2. *Lexikon-Kosch*--p. 878



certainty, and bringing it vividly before the minds and hearts of the people. His influence on contemporaneous youth was irresistible. (1)

Professor Francke takes up the thread: "Herder's influence on German culture cannot easily be overestimated. He was the first among modern thinkers (n.b. thinkers, not feelers) to whom every individual appeared as a public character, as an heir of all the ages, as an epitome of a whole nation. He first attempted on a large scale to represent all history as an unbroken chain of cause and effect, or rather as a grand living whole in whose development no atom is lost, no force is wasted....Without him, the theory of evolution would be without one of its most exalted apostles." (2)

As an educator, as J. M. Address (3) points out, Herder followed the principle of Kant, the principle of the categorical imperative, of the unqualified necessity to adhere to the regulations imposed by duty. "To imbue the youth with the stern and uncompromising sense of duty, to train them to champion the cause of righteousness of their own free will, seemed to him (Kant) to be the highest aim of education." (4) Herder's insistence on serious, prolonged application to work has been shown above. Address adds that "from his father, Herder no doubt gained that uncompromising sense of devotion to duty which formed such a dominant trait in his character." (5) All this is utterly foreign to Rousseau.

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1. Op. cit.-Kurz-p. 48
  2. Morley-op.cit.-Vol. I-p- 89
  3. Compayré-op. cit.- p. 9
  4. Faguet-op. cit.-p.420
  5. Compayré-op. cit.-p. 111

German though Jean-Jacques may be described, and numerous though his resemblances may be to Herder, there is still a world of incompatibility between Rousseau's temperament and the German genius, and a world of difference between him and Herder.

Again I conclude that the influence of Rousseau, in terms of its effect on Germany and Herder, was powerful not in inducing specific reforms, directly, but in coloring the general atmosphere of the century, in inducing a mood of dissatisfaction, and an urge to improve the human situation.



### CONCLUSION

The only positive and original contribution of Rousseau to civilization is heat. The ideas he presented to society were not his, any of them; and his presentation was not marked by logic, original or borrowed. John Morley makes the statement the "Rousseau has distinctions in abundance, but the distinction of knowing how to think, in the exact sense of that term, was hardly among them." (1.)

Gabriel Compayré (2.) points out that many of Rousseau's central ideas were specifically expressed by Turgot ten years earlier. "Down to the fundamental maxim of Emile on the original innocence of our inclinations, everything has already been expressed by Turgot." In the years preceding the publication of Emile, doctors and moralists undertook the same nursing-campaign, but it was not until Emile took up the banner that it found true success. 'Rousseau himself,' says Faguet, (3.) 'said at one time that the poet follows the public taste while developing it, and brings the public to ponder nothing but what they are going to ponder anyway.' Mme. de Staël has remarked that Rousseau discovered nothing, but that he did set everything ablaze. (4.)

With regard to Rousseau's condemnation of society, Emile Faguet supports the opinion that he actually loved society and longed for acceptance into the aristocratic circles, but found

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1. Morley--op. cit.--Vol. I-p. 89
  2. Compayré--op. cit.-p. 9
  3. Faguet--op. cit. p.-420
  4. Compayré-op. cit.-p. 111

himself unqualified for admission, and consequently conceived a hatred for aristocracy which ultimately spread to cover society in general. (1)

To account for Rousseau's influence, Faguet explains that he was a romancer and a poet at a time when people were famished for true poetry and really Romantic novels.

Many attempts had been made before Rousseau at writing in styles different from those of the pure seventeenth century. It was Rousseau who happened to be best prepared to express with novelty, vigor, a fiery sort of logic, the confused ideas stirring in the eighteenth century breast.

Rousseau was not well-born, well-bred; he had a penchant for vice, for base vices; he had hidden, shameful cravings of a kind that does not occur in gentlemen; he possessed timidity that is suddenly metamorphosed to effrontery; he lacked the safeguard of honor, of an inner nobility, to act as a vigilant censor by the side of his defects. All of this colored his language, which always retained something of the poor tone of his earlier years, the years, particularly, of his apprenticeship, when he was subject to such epithets as scoundrel, cheat, cad, good-for-nothing. Sainte-Beuve condemns Rousseau's needless references to practices not indulged in by moral persons. But Sainte-Beuve's final estimate is that his follies and vices as a man could not prevail over his original merits and conceal from us the great parts whereby he still finds himself superior to his descendants. (2)

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1. Faguet--op. cit.--p. 346
  2. Ste.-Beuve--op. cit.--pp. 84-85, 97



This is the final opinion of many. Sainte-Beuve confesses, "It will always be impossible for us not to love Jean-Jacques Rousseau." (1) Jules Lemaitre likewise says, (2) "It is impossible for me not to love him: I feel that he was good." Campayré chimes, "Let us love him and pity him because of his sufferings... 'It is enough for us to know' that 'He was a man of heart and a genius to boot.'" (2) Outside of France, C. D. Chaplin renders homage to the man. (3) 'Rousseau', he says, 'is worthy of our consideration and sympathy; his blunders are to be accounted for on a basis of his inheritance and neglected childhood. When we consider the benefits humanity has enjoyed as a result of his pleas, we conclude the world is better off for his having lived in it. He paid dearly enough for his offenses.' "Let us be charitable and just to the memory of this genius among the sons of men."

As for Rousseau's influence on Germany, and particularly on Herder, a quotation from Ste.-Beuve suggests a pertinent thought: (4) these great poets (of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) "had no real need for imitating one another; they found within themselves and in the atmosphere of their century a sufficient inspiration, which they have all adopted and adapted to their own style, and stamped with the seal of their talent and their personality. All these types (Romantic) burst into bloom in Germany, England and France under the same general atmospheric current that came from the state of the world at that moment."

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1. Campayré-op. cit.--p.117

2. Ibidem

3. Education-p. 143-19

4. Larroumet-op. cit-15th Lesson on Chateaubriand by Ste.-Beuve

Rousseau happened, according to Professor Finney (1), to make himself the mouthpiece of a movement, and stumbled into immortality. The iron of democratic protest was getting hot, and he struck it. He intensified the prevailing atmosphere.

Friedrich Schiller expressed in ideal terms Romantic Germany's opinion of Jean-Jacques:

Monument von unsrer Zeiten Schande,  
Ew'ge Schmachschrift deiner Mutterlande,  
Rousseaus Grab, gegrüsset seist du mir!  
Fried' und Ruh' den Trümmern deines Lebens!  
Fried' und Ruhe suchtest du vergebens,  
Fried' und Ruhe fandst du hier!

Wenn wird doch die alte Wunde narben?  
Einst war's finster, und die Weisen starben!  
Nun ist's lichter, und der Weise stirbt.  
Sokrates ging unter durch Sophisten,  
Rousseau leidet, Rousseau fällt durch Christen,  
Rousseau - der aus Christen Menschen wirbt.

Dean Graves of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education reminds us, (2) "Of course modern education has advanced infinitely beyond anything implied by Rousseau or even the later reformers of the past century, but it is out of his attempts at destruction that has grown this nobler structure." And Ossian Lang goes even farther, (3) "Rousseau was not an educator".....'but he inspired educators'. It was not so much what he said on education but how he said it that made him great in this field. It was, as Joubert has said, the "bowels of feeling" which he imparted to his words that caused them to take such penetrating effect as they did.

Emile popularized the educational philosophy that the great

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1. Soc. Phil. Ed.-p. 138
  2. Graves--op. cit.-p. 443
  3. Lang--op. cit.-p. 3



thinkers of the ages had built up. Baile is not a pedagogical treatise, it is a work of art, a poem.

Herbart, Froebel, Dewey greatly improved upon Rousseau's doctrine and caused its spirit to be incorporated in modern practice. This does not imply that they received their ideas from Rousseau, but "there is no doubt that his inspiration and spirit permeated the entire educational field." (1)

Present day education owes the inspiration for many of its excellent qualities to Jean-Jacques. But also there is a negative side. To some, this negative side outweighs the positive. Rousseau, the father of the atrocities of the French revolution, is the source of many, if not most, of our present evils.

Irving Babbitt laments (2) the prevailing Rousseauistic individualism in the American age, where instinct and idiosyncrasy are exalted, where extremists, endeavoring to satisfy all temperaments, would push the principle of election (choice of subjects) almost down to the nursery, and devise, if possible, a separate system of education for every individual. 'We are living', Babbitt continues, 'in a privileged age, when not only every man, as Donne sang, but every child'

"thinks he hath got  
to be a Phoenix, and that there can be  
None of that kind, of which he is, but he."

'Our educators, in their anxiety not to thwart native aptitudes, encourage the individual in an in-breeding of his own temperament, which, beginning in the kindergarten, is carried upward through the

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1. Sarafian--op. cit.--p. 88

2. Lit. and Amer. College-p. 93

college by the elective system, and receives its final consecration in his specialty. We are all invited to abound in our own sense and to fall in the direction in which we lean. Have we escaped from the pedantry of authority and prescription, which was the bane of the old education, only to lapse into the pedantry of individual? One is sometimes tempted to acquiesce in Luther's comparison of mankind to a drunken peasant on horseback, who, if propped up on one side, slips over on the other.

Just as is said of the Bible, it also is virtually true of Rousseau, that almost anything can be proved by appropriate quotations from his books. It is not the letter, but the spirit that counts. Rousseau's letter is proven unoriginal and self-contradictory. Specific ideas are foreign to him. Feeling, emotion, passion mark his personality. It is his spirit that carries significance.

Jean-Jacques struck, as it were, upon the resonant chords of his all-feeling heart, and sent reverberating through the century a cacophonous symphony to induce a vibrant note in the heart of man; which note grew in volume till all France was set a-quiver in a growing tremor that eventuated in the catastrophic upheaval of 1789.

Society was at one extreme when Rousseau's spirit impelled it to the opposite extreme - like Luther's drunken peasant. But, as the peasant was on a moving horse, so was society in motion. The "return to nature" formula, as a protest against tradition, was a signpost of progress - pointing forward.

Such a protest "seems to accompany or precede any great advance



in human thought." In one country it takes the form of Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, and Reform; in another, of Rousseau, the guillotine, and Napoleon; in a third, of Herder, Goethe, and Kant. "For a time things are distract, people seem to go mad, thought staggers like a drunken man, or revolves like a whirlpool. But that is the way of the progress of the human spirit. It speaks by contradictions, it publishes itself in paradox, it advances by tacks like a ship against the wind. This is the beauty of error; this is the truth of extremes; and those who, by distance of time or loftiness of soul, are raised above the gasps and madness of the hour, tell us that from their height after all the course looks straight and the progress sure." (1)

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1. Nevinson--op.cit.--p. 170

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